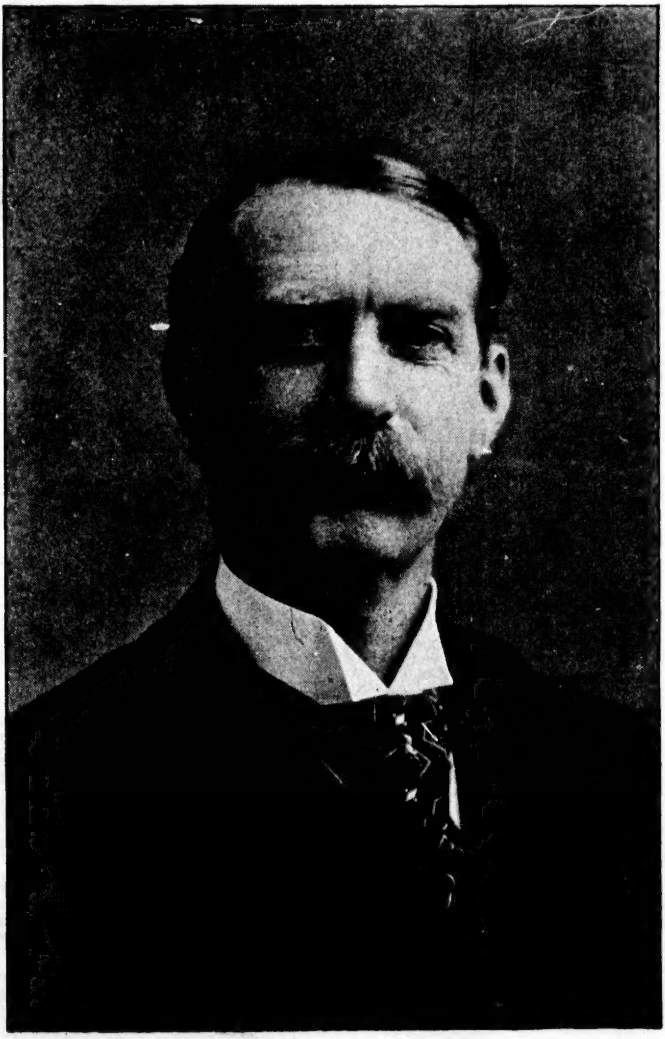

Frontier Humor

SOME RATHER LUDICROUS EXPERIENCES THAT BEFELL MYSELF AND MY ACQUAINTANCES AMONG FRONTIER CHARACTERS BEFORE I MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF MY ESTEEMED FRIENDS

"The Brownies"

By

Palmer Cox.

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SAM PATTERSON'S BALLOON.

LAST night while a party of us were sitting around the table in the cabin of the *New World*, talking about the "Avitor" and aerial sailing generally, our conversation was interrupted by a dark, raw-boned Hoosier who had entered the cabin shortly after the steamer left her wharf. He kept squirming on his chair for some time, and was evidently anxious to take part in the conversation. "I say, boys, I'm Sam Patterson," he commenced at last, "and if this yer dish is free and no one han't no objections, I'd like mi'ty well to dip *my* spoon in."

All turned to look at the speaker. Even the fat old gentleman who during our conversation had not taken his eyes from the *Christian*

Guardian he was reading, stretched up and peered over the top of the paper at Sam. Be-

SAM PATTERSON.

fore any one could reply the Hoosier gave his chair a hitch nigher the table and went on:

"I say, boss," he continued, addressing his conversation to me, perhaps because I had just

been expressing my opinion, "I don't go a picayune on navigatin' the air. They ain't no need of talkin' and gassin' about crossin' the 'tlantic or any of them foolish ventur's. I happen to know somethin' about balloonin', and understand pooty near what you *can* do and what you *can't* do with one of them fellers. I'd a plag'y sight ruther undertake to cross the ocean in a dug-out, than ventur' in one of them tricky cobwebs; you can't depend on 'em. Thar like a flea—when a man thinks he's got 'em he hain't."

"Perhaps you are misled by prejudice?" I ventured to remark.

"No, I ain't, nuther," answered the Hoosier, "I speak from experience. I've bin thar."

"Oh! you have given the aeronautic science some attention then?" I said. "An inventor, I presume?"

"Wal, no. I don't exactly claim to be an inventor," he replied; "I reckon I foller'd on the old plan, exceptin' in the material used in constructin'."

"Did you ever make an ascension?" I asked.

"Wal, yes, I've bin up *some*," he answered dryly.

"Have you ever been very high?" inquired the fat old gentleman, who seemed to grow interested.

"Perhaps not so high as eagles or turkey-buzzards fly, but a mi'ty sight higher than barn-yard fowls ventur'," answered the Hoosier. "You see," he continued, "I was stayin' down to Orleans once for about a week, and thar was a professor had a balloon in the park hitched to a stake, and he was histin' people up the length of the rope for two bits a head. I stepped into the cradle that was a hangin' to it, and went up the length of the rope, and liked it pooty well. I went up three or four times and made considerable inquiries about the manner of constructin' and inflatin', as I was cal'latin' to rig up one when I got hum to Tuckersville.

"When I got back I telled Sal what I was

bent on doin'. She tried pooty hard to git the notion out of my head, but 'twas stuck thar, like a bur to a cow's tail. I telled her it mout be the makin' of us, so arter a while she gin in, and as silk was too alfired expensive, Sal gin me a lot of bed sheets and helped me sew 'em together down in the cellar. We put it together down thar 'cause I didn't want any of the neighbors to know what was up, until I could astonish 'em some fine mornin' by risin' above the hull caboodle, and for wunst lookin' down on some on 'em that was snuffin' around and tryin' to look down on me mi'ty bad.

"I used a rousin' great corn basket for the cradle, and arter she was all ready for inflatin' I had my life insured, 'cause I didn't want Sal to suffer by any of my ventur's. Then I went to Sol Spence, the lawyer, and had him draw up the writin's of a will, and while he was doin' it he worked the balloon secret out of me, and wanted me to take him along. I telled him 'twas pooty risky business, and that he'd hev to

run some chances, as I was cal'latin' on seein' what clouds war made of before I came down. He said them war his sentiments exactly; that he allers had a great hankerin' to git up thar and see what sort of a spongy thing they war, anyhow.

"I didn't object much; I reckoned the sheets war good for it, though he went over two hundred, but I cal'lated he'd do instead of ballast, and be company besides. So I took some bed cord and slung another corn basket below the one I was gwine in, and after dark we hauled the great floppy thing out into the back yard, and arter we got it histed up on stakes we commenced buildin' fires under her to git the gas up and gittin' things ready ginnerally. About sun-up we had her all ready to step into. Spence had his sketch book along, cal'latin' on takin' some bird's-eye views, and I had a bottle of tea, cal'latin' to empty it gwine up, and fill it with rain water while up thar. The thing was a-wallopin' and rollin' around the yard mi'ty impatient to git off. I hitched her first to

the grindstone frame, but she was snakin' that around the yard, and the dogs commenced sech an all-fired yelpin' and scuddin' round and watchin' of it through the fence, that we were obliged to put 'em in the cellar, 'cause we didn't want the hull neighborhood attractid by ther barkin'. Then we fastened the balloon to the shed post, and left Sal to watch her while we war eatin' a snack of breakfast. Pooty soon arter we heard Sal a-shoutin' that she was a-gwine off with the wood-shed. So we ran out mi'ty lively, and had no time to spare, nuther. I jumped up and caught one rope, and Spence got hold of another. We couldn't fetch it down till Sal caught hold of my leg, and between us three we pulled it back agin.

"She gin a sort of puff and come down pooty sudden when near the ground, and one of the posts of the shed came fair onto the back of a leetle pet hog that was rootin' round the yard, and knuckled his back down into the chips, leavin' his head and hinder parts stickin' up. He commenced sich an uproarious squealin' you

could hear him more'n two miles. While Spence and I were fussin' at the ropes to unloose her from the shed, she took another sudden start up again and shot away from us quicker than scat. Sal happened to have hold of a rope at the time, and up she went into the air, scootin' like a rocket. Sal was a plucky critter. Shoot me, if she wasn't as full of grit as a sandstone. She could have let go that rope, but she wouldn't; she wanted to fetch the consarn down agin, and was bound to cling to her until she did. Blow me, if I didn't think for a while I was goin' to lose the old woman. Thar she was a-hangin' on to the end of the rope, hollerin' like a hull regiment chargin' a battery, and trailin' and swingin' about without any notion of lettin' go.

"We had a lively time of it gettin' her down agin too, now I can tell you. I jumped over a fence into the garden, and snatchin' up a rake commenced to scrape at her, and finally the teeth caught in her dress, and then I had a pooty good hold so long as Sal was good for it.

ATTEMPTED ABDUCTION OF SAM'S WIFE.

Spence got hold of another rope that was danglin' around, so between us we got her down the second time. Then I sung out to Spence, 'Spence,' ses I, 'climb into yer basket and let's be off, or the hull town will be here and stop us gwine.' So we clim' into our baskets and flung out Sal's flatirons, that we had for ballast, and up we shot like a spark up a chimney. I hollered back to Sal to put the hog out of pain and stop the squeakin', and the last I seed of her as we went round the gable, she was a whackin' him over the head with the back of an ax, and he was a hollerin' wuss and wuss.

"The wind took the balloon over a swamp back of the village, where no person seemed to see us, and then the world began to drop away pooty nicely. 'Twant long till I heered Spence callin' out, mi'ty skeered like:—

"'I guess, Sam, you mout as well land her and let me git out.'

"'Are you afeered, Spence?' ses I, jest that way.

"'No,' he answered. 'I arn't afeered, but I

"LET ME GIT OUT!"

reckon my fam'ly would be mi'ty uneasy about this time if they knowed whar I was, and I begin to feel pooty sowlicitous about 'em.'

"'This yer thing is somethin' like law,' I ses, 'when yer' into her you've got to keep goin' till somethin' gins out. She hasn't got a rope a holdin' of her down now, Spence, and as for yer fam'ly, I reckon the're a mi'ty sight safer than you be, so if you have any spare sowlicitude, you had better be a tuckin' it onto yourself. 'Sides,' I contin'ed, 'I hain't studied into the lettin' down part of it half so much as into the rizin'.'

"'Jerusalem!' he shouted. 'I thought you war famil'ar with the hull thing, or I'd have as soon thought of gwine up in a whirlwind.'

"'I fancy I do know considerable about it,' I ses.

"'Then why can't you stop her right here?' he hollered, lookin' up, pooty pale.

"'I cal'late we've got to keep ascendin' while the gas holds out,' I answered.

"'Thunder and lightnin'!' he hollered, jest

that way, 'and what are you agwine to do arter the gas gins out?'

"'I reckon,' ses I, 'we'll come down agin.'

"'A flukin'?' he asked.

"'Perhaps so,' ses I. 'I cal'late we'll come down faster than we're gwine up, but I'm hopin' to catch an undercurrent of a'r that will sweep us along, and let us down sort of gently.'

"Just as we war talkin' somethin' gin a whoppin' crack overhead, and she began to drop down by the run pooty lively.

"'What's that?' shouted Spence. 'I think I hear a sort of tearin' noise up thar; ain't somethin' ginnin' out?'

"'I reckon the old woman's sheets have commenced to gin out,' I said, kind of careless like, though beginnin' to feel mi'ty narvous all to wunst. On lookin' down, I seed Spence was a cranin' out of the basket and lookin' down, jest as pale as could be.

"'Sufferin' pilgrims!' he shouted. 'Can't you throw out somethin', Sam, and lighten her

a leetle? She's droppin' straight down, like an aerolite.'

"'I hain't got anythin' to throw out exceptin' the tea bottle, and that ar' is e'enmost empty,' I ses. 'I cal'late we've got to take our chances; if you hain't forgot yer childhood prayers, you mout as well be a runnin' of 'em over, for things are beginnin' to look mi'ty skeery jest now, I can tell ye.'

"Pooty soon I heer'd him a mumblin' to himself, and I allers allowed he was prayin'.

"We war now about steeple high, and as I had expected, the wind caught us and began to sweep us around pooty loose. As we went wallopin' over St. Patrick's church, Spence's basket struck the spire and was a spillin' of him out like a lobster out of a market basket. I peered over and seed he was e'enmost gone, so I hollered, 'Go for the spire, Spence, it's your only chance.' He seemed to be of the same mind, for as I spoke he was a grabbin' for it and managed to git hold of one end of the weather-vane. I reckon if he had got hold on

both ends he'd ha' bin all right; but things war gettin' desperate and he had to take what come. The balloon riz some when he fell out, and as it was a movin' off I looked back to see how he was a makin' it. He was a hangin' thar like a gymnast, a kickin' and a wormin' and the steeple a rockin'. But he was too awful heavy; he couldn't draw himself up nohow. Pooty soon the tail of the fish gin out, and down he slid along the steeple like a shot coon down a 'simmon tree.

"Fortunately he struck the roof and over it he rolled, clawin' and a scratchin' the shingles as he went. But it was 'all go and no whoa,' as the boy said when he was a slidin' the greased banister. Old Father McGillop was just comin' out of the vestry door after matins as Spence come a scootin' over the eaves and down kerflumix right on top of him. This, ye see, sort of broke the fall for Spence, but it spread the distress. He was so heavy and come with such force he disjinted the neck of his Riverence, and shoved it so far down into

the body that his ears were restin' on the shoulders. They had to git a shovel to dig him out of the ground, and Doc Willoughby was a fussin' over him more than five hours, a yankin' his neck out of his body, and pressin' his ears into shape, and "——

"Stop now," said the fat old chap, who was worked up to the top notch of attention, "do you mean to say he lived after his neck was dislocated?"

"Wal, I reckon, boss," said the narrator, as he took a fresh quid of tobacco, "I hain't made no sech unreasonable assertion. I was sayin' they hauled his neck back, and put his ears in place agin (or ruther one of 'em, for the butcher's dog eat t'other one before the old sexton could git to it), so that he mout make somethin' like a decent appearance in the coffin.

"Soon as Spence went over the eave I lost sight of him, for I was drivin' pooty briskly over Kent's corn patch, and as I came sweepin' down by the widder O'Donnell's she was in the

yard gittin' an apron full of chips. I reckon she heer'd a burrin' sound overhead, 'cause she looked up, and when she seed the balloon she gin a squall and cried out somethin' about protection. I reckoned she was callin' on the saints, but had no time just then to listen. Before she had gone many steps she dropped, and I allowed she had gone down in a faintin' fit.

"I was a drivin' and a driftin' over the village like a thistle down, for more than two hours, and the dogs war a barkin' and the men and wimmin a hollerin' and a runnin' arter it wherever it drifted. The barn-yard fowls war a cacklin' and a screamin'. Jewillikens! didn't I make a rumption among them though! You'd think thar war forty thousand hawks and turkey-buzzards a hoverin' over the village, by the way they scattered, aginst the winders, ahind stun walls, into the wells, under lumber piles and currint bushes; such a scrougin' and squattin' and scootin' I never did see. Parson Jones had thirteen lights of glass smashed by

fowls batterin' aginst the winders tryin' to git in, and Dud Davis, the blacksmith, fished seven dead hens, two turkeys, a guinea fowl, and two small pigs out of his well next day, whar they sought refuge and war drown'd. Dad Kent gin me six traces of good seed corn next fall. He said barrin' the killin' of Priest McGillop, it was the best thing that ever happened in Tuckersville. He said I did more for his crop than if he had a scarecrow standin' astride every hill. Thar wasn't a crow flew within two miles of the village for mor'n a fortnight, and by that time the corn was grown so they couldn't pull it up.

"Pooty soon the balloon come down about house high and druv over toward the dee-pot. I was a hopin' she'd catch on the telegraph wire, but she skimm'd over, like a swallow over a fence, and immediately riz up tree high agin, where scrape, slap, slash, she went into an ole pine that stood out alone in the field. I was scratched pooty bad, but hung on to the limbs, and arter a while slid down the tree leavin' the balloon hangin' in the tree-top. Great turnips!

if all Tuckersville wasn't down thar in five minutes. Thar war young 'uns runnin' around half-dressed, with corn-dodgers in their hands, and wimmin with babies in their arms. It was like a dog fight, only, as the feller said when describin' the nigger by the mulatter, it was more so.

"The train was delayed half an hour that mornin', cause the engineer, conductor and all hands jumped off the cars and ran down to the balloon. Peg-leg Dibbly, the Mexican war veteran, was thar, hobblin' around among the rest. He was in such a hurry to git down to the tree he wouldn't go around by the road, but started in to take a short cut across the marsh with the crowd. And he had a sweet, sweatin' time of it too, now I can assure you. First his cane would stick, and just about the time he would git that out, down would slide his iron-shod leg fully a foot into the mud, and stake him thar like a scarecrow. Then he would look down to where the people were standin', and jerk and swear until the want of

breath only would make him let up. He got down thar after awhile though, but he had to crawl considerable before he could do it; and

"GO IN, CRIPPLE."

arter he got thar he was bobbin' here and bobbin' thar, tryin' to git a better look up into the tree, until at last he stumbled and fell across one

of Dud Davis' young 'uns, and gin her left leg a compound fractur'. She set up a screamin', and he was so weak and frightened he couldn't git up agin no how, but lay thar gruntin', and

A RIGHT-ANGLED TRY-ANKLE.

sprawlin', and kickin' his one leg around. The blacksmith was thar himself, and when he seed his young 'un down in the mud with her leg broke, you never seed a man so mad in all

your born days. He jest ran and grabbed the old pensioner by the coat collar, and slung him mor'n fifteen feet, landin' him slidin' on his back in the mud, like a crawfish.

"About the same time Tubbs, the cooper, was a lookin' up, and he seed a bough springin' up, and he allowed the balloon was comin' down; so he started to run, and stepped on the foot of Kent's snappin' bull-dog, that was a settin' thar lookin' up the tree, thinkin' thar must be a coon up it. The cur whirled round mad, and set his teeth into the nighest thing to him, which happened to be old Polly Allen's ankle. But he got more than he bargained for, though, for she was so tuff that his teeth stuck thar, and she was a screamin' and a runnin' hum, draggin' him arter her mor'n half the way. I never did see sich an excitin' time. School was dismissed, and there wasn't a lick of work done in Tuckersville the hul day. The hul talk was 'Sam Patterson's balloon, Sam Patterson's balloon.' I didn't have to pay a picayune for anything for mor'n three weeks. Parson Jones preached a

tellin' sermon about the balloon, and thar wasn't standin' room in the church; they had to keep the windows open and let people standin' on the outside stick their heads in and listen. He likened it first to youth, when it was a rollin' around in the back yard, whar nobody seed it, impatient and ambitious to rise. Then like unto manhood, when it was up, a bustin' and droppin' down agin. Next he said it resembled old age, when it was in rags a floppin' around in the tree, more for observation than use. Thar wasn't hardly a dry eye in the hul meetin' house. Hard-hearted old sinners cried like teethin' babies.

"The balloon hung in the tree all summer, and every day thar'd be a crowd of people starin' at it, like cats at a bird cage. A phootographer came the hul way from town, and took lots of views of the remains; and one of Frank Leslie's special artists come rattlin' down thar, and sot on a stun wall for two days drawin' sketches of it. He said it was the most spirited subject he had sot eyes on since he sketched the hoop-skirt Jeff Davis was captured in.

JIM DUDLEY'S FLIGHT.

THAT blabbing Hoosier, Bob Browser, has found me out, and paid me a call, boring me with his confounded stories. Even as a hungry parrot when crackers are in view, or as a miller's hopper when water is high and the farmer's meal bags low, he rattles right along with copious discourse.

"What's that you say! Did you know Jim Dudley? What! him as the boys in Gosport used to call Carrot Top Jim? Wal, I'll be rattled if that ain't queer. Wasn't he the allfiredest shirk you ever did see? Perhaps you remember how sudden he left Gosport jest before the war? Oh, that's so, sure enough, you went north sometime afore that.

"Wal, that chap was etarnally gettin' in some scrape or another; I do jest think I've helped

BOB BROWSER.

that Jim out of more close corners than there are buildin's in this yer town. Yer see him and

me was great chums, and roomed at the same house on York Street. Jim was a courtin' a butcher's darter that lived out near the cem't'ry for 'bout a year afore he left, leastwise he was a totin' of her around considerable, takin' her to picnics, circuses, hoss races, and the like. I kind of had my doubts about him gettin' married, 'cause he was a pooty sot ole batch', and sometimes I'd ask him when the nuptils were a comin' off; but he'd allers shuffle out of it by sayin' when they did come I'd git an invite, and kind of larf it off jest that way.

"One night pooty soon arter I had got into bed I heered some one thumpin' at my door, and afore I had time to say anythin' Jim Dudley was plum across the room and standin' by the bedside.

"'Bob,' ses he, jest that way, 'we've got to part agin' and I've come to gin your paw a shake afore I leave.'

"'What's up now, Jim?' ses I, pooty surprised and settin' up amazin fast in bed to strike a light, 'cause I allers liked Jim. Drat my pictur, if I didn't. He stuck to me like a hoss-

leech when I was down with the yaller fever. I was peeled down so mi'ty thin that I didn't make a shadder only arter I'd been eatin' corn dodgers or somethin' that wasn't transparent. Soon as I got a light I seed his face was tombstun white exceptin' some long red scratches onto it, that made me think thar had been cats a-clawin' of him.

"'I haint time to gin perticulars now, but water's gettin' too plaguey shaller for me in Gosport,' ses he, jest that way. 'And I'm gwine to pull out for deeper soundin's. I want to head off the night express, and as I've got only fifteen minutes to do it in, must be a movin',' and givin' my hand a rattlin' shake he turned, and before I could say 'scat,' he was goin' down the stairs like a bucket fallin' down a well, and I thought he hadn't more than got to the middle of the flight when I heer'd the door slam behind him.

"I lay awake thar for hours thinkin' and wonderin' what on airth could have turned up to make Jim dust out of town so all-fired sudden,

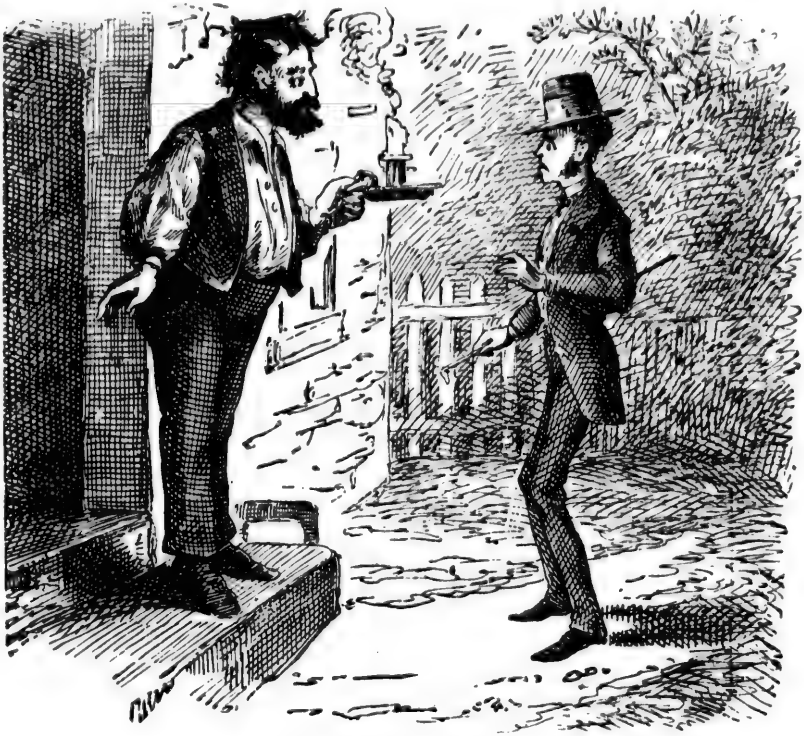
bein' as how he was doin' pooty well pecun'ar'ly—that is, for *him*.

"I kind of mistrusted somethin' had gone wrong with him out to old Hurley's—the butcher's. So the next day, bein' kind of curious, I took a stroll out that way, to look around a leetle and see what was goin' on. I seed a glaz'er a fussin' round a winder, and old Hurley sittin' on the steps lookin' mi'ty solemn at a hat—which I knowed was Jim's—that was a-hangin' on a bush in the garden.

"Some months arter this the war was a bilin' and I jined a company and went down to Cairo to go into camp. By jingo! would you believe it? almost the first man I ran ag'in' was Jim Dudley! He'd enlisted in a hoss regiment up to St. Louis, and come down to camp a few days afore me. We were both mi'ty tickled to meet one another right thar, so we p'inted for a place where we could have a straight-out chat, and while we were sittin' thar, talkin' about old times, ses I to him:—

"'Jim, now we're a gwine down into this

blamed muss, and the chances are pooty good for us to git chawed up down thar, and nothin' more to be heer'd about us—now s'posin' you



OLD HURLEY WELCOMES JIM.

tell a feller what made you pull up stakes and dust from Gosport so amazin' fast, last Fall.'

"'Wal, Bob,' ses he, 'seein' we've met agin, I don't mind if I do 'lighten you a leetle in regard to my leavin' so sudden. You remember

I'd bin over to Franklin some time afore I left, and jest got back to Gosport that day, and in the evenin' I started out to see Mag. I was a hopin' the old man wouldn't be to hum—he ginerally was away Saturday nights.

"'Twas dark afore I got there, leastwise the bats were a flitterin' aroun' the gables and apple trees, a-lookin' for thar suppers. I gin the bell-knob a jerk anyhow, and pooty soon old Hurley hisself came to the door, with a candle in his hand. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and I reckon he had jest come hum from work. He kind of gin a start, as though he was surprised to see me; and I gin a start, too, and jumped back from the door pooty quick, for I thought I heer'd him grit his teeth a leetle—somethin' like a sheep arter she's bin eatin' beans—but I wasn't sartain.

"'Come in, M-i-s-t-e-r Dudley,' ses he, kind of low and coaxin' like. 'I hope you've bin enjoyin' good health. I hope you've come prepared to stop with us awhile.'

"Thankin' him for his kind wishes, I follered

him along, wonderin' what in time made him so amazin' solicitous for my health all to wunst, 'cause I knowed the old man hated me worse than a rat does pizen.

"He didn't stop in the parlor, where some folks were sittin', but kept on into a small room, beck'nin' me to foller, which I did, though I was beginnin' to feel pooty suspicious about the old feller's movements.

"'Stay here a minute, Mr. Dudley,' ses he, arter I had sot down. 'Make yourself comfortable until I come back agin,' he continued, jest that way, and then he stepped out.

"I tell you, I begun to feel wonderful fidgity and kind of prickly down along the spine; and when I heer'd the old man comin' back, and heer'd his feet slappin' down heavier and faster than when he went out, then I knowed thar was trouble ahead. I could feel a distressin' presentiment jest a-bubblin' through my veins, and limberin' up all my jints.

"Pooty soon the old man came in, a-holdin' his left hand in front of him doubled up tight as

though for boxin', and keepin' his right hand ahind him, kind of careless like, as though 'twas there by accident. I knowed 'twas no nat'ral position, and kept peerin' round, for I 'spected he had a cow-hide, and was calculatin' to gin me a sound tannin'; but when he went to shet the door ahind him, I got a glimpse of the alfiredest great butcher's cleaver you ever yet sot eyes on, a-shinin' jest as bright as could be. Jerusalem! if that bone-splitter didn't make me begin to feel tarnation uneasy, then thar's no use sayin' it. My heart flopped up so far into my throat it actewelly seemed as though I could taste it.

"'I've got very pressin' business down town, and guess I'd better be a-movin', ses I, rizin' up.

"'S-i-t d-o-w-n,' ses he, easy, that way, as though he wasn't disturbed any, though I seed he was awful pale. 'Don't be in a hurry,' he went on, keepin' his back flat against the door the whole time. 'You've been pokin' around here 'bout long enuff,' said he, 'and I think it time you 'tended to bisness.'

"'I've sent for Father Quinn,' he contin'ed, 'cal'latin' to hev you jined to the family rite off, afore you leave the house,' and he gin the cleaver a sweepin' flourish; but while he was a-doin' it he sort of took his eyes away from me, and before he could say 'scat,' I jest shet my eyes tight, and made one detarmined lunge for the winder, head fust, like a sheep through a clump of briars, and went a-crashin' plum out on all fours into the gardin, takin' the hul lower sash along with me.

"The old man gin one rattlin' shout like a wounded gorrillar, when he seed me go. I knowed he'd be arter me mi'ty quick, so I broke through the gardin for the toll-road, the blarsted ole sash a-hangin' around my neck like a hog-yoke, catchin' on everythin' as I ran. I hadn't more'n struck the road and begun to dust along it, when I heered the old man comin,' a-snortin' an' a spatterin,' down the turnpike ahind me. I 'lowed he'd overhaul me if I kept right on, 'cause I hadn't got the sash off yet, and the blamed thing was jest ginnin' my neck jess;

so flouncin' aside pooty sudden, I flopped down ahind a sassafras bush, and I hadn't more'n got thar nuther when old Hurley went a-rackin' and a rearin' past, the bloodthirsty

OLD HURLEY ON THE WAR PATH.

great meat-ax a-gleamin' in his hand. He reckoned I was still ahead, so he went a-flukin' down the road, clearin' the toll-bar at one bounce, without so much as dustin' it, and

keepin' right on for Gosport. Thunder! didn't I tear off the ruins of that winder mi'ty fast, though? Then I clim' the fence, and took across lots through Hiram Nye's corn patch, and down by Blake's orchard, comin' into town by the lower road. I think more'n likely old Hurley kept a-goin' it plum to Gosport before he mistrusted that I dodged him; and I do jest think if he had got hold on me—a-bilin' as he was—he wouldn't have left a piece of me together large enough to bait a mink trap. Wasn't that an all-fired close dodge, though? I reckon you'll not see me in Gosport agin, leastways not while old Hurley's a-livin'. I've no notion o' gettin' married in no such haste as that. Thar's the bugle callin' to muster—let's hurry up and go."

AN OLD WOMAN IN PERIL.

YESTERDAY, while in the back country, I saw an old woman in what would have been a very laughable predicament, had it not been a very pitiable one.

An unusually large vulture had for some time been soaring in the neighborhood, occasionally scraping acquaintance with one of the fat ewes grazing in the valley. Several of the farmers had felt the vexation of seeing him perched upon a lofty eminence and making the wool fly from some favorite Cotswold. They were justly enraged, and resolved to put a stop to his depredations.

They accordingly posted themselves nigh their flocks, and with guns heavily charged,

awaited the advent of the rapacious bird. But he was no booby, and though his gizzard could digest a good-sized rib or hoof with all the ease of a Ballyshannon woman making away with a mealy potato, yet he hadn't the least inclination to test its grinding power upon a charge of slugs or buckshot.

For several days thereafter he was known in the neighborhood as a "high flier." With a pining maw he would sit upon some heaven-kissing crag, and with drooping head watch the fleecy flocks grazing in the green valley below. He found it difficult, however, to cloy the hungry edge of appetite by bare imagination of a feast, and, emboldened by want, began to drop to a lower level when flying across the fields.

Yesterday, as mutton was out of the question, he resolved to try his beak upon some tougher viand, and while in the vicinity of the village, he swooped down upon a little old woman who was gathering chips in front of her cottage.

The poor old body had not the least warning

THE OLD LADY'S ASCENT.

of the vulture's approach. As she stooped in the act of picking fuel enough to cook her evening meal he dropped upon her like an arrow.

Fastening his powerful talons in the strong material of her loose-fitting garments, he spread abroad his mighty wings and began to haul her heavenward. The astonishment, anxiety and indescribable antics of the poor old lady when she found herself slowly but surely leaving *terra firma* by an unknown agency were indeed terrible to witness.

She knew not whether it was a gold-tinseled angel, or an iron-rusted demon, that was thus, in open day, and while she was yet in the flesh, unceremoniously translating her to some remote planet; she had no means of discovering; she was only certain she was going—that her direction was onward and upward. Her favorite hollyhock tickled her nose as she swept over her little garden, and the clothes-line, that for a moment seemed to baffle the vulture's flight, was now stretching beneath.

She deployed her feet, regardless of appearances, first to the right, then to the left, above and below, vainly endeavoring to come in contact with something that would give her an inkling of what was responsible for this mysterious movement. There was a vague uncertainty about the whole proceeding well calculated to alarm her. Even though she succeeded in shaking herself loose, her fall would now be fearful, and each moment was adding to the danger. What could I do? I was powerless to save. I had no gun, and even if I had there would have been some grave doubts in my mind as to the propriety of firing, as I generally shoot low, and such an error in my aim could hardly have proved otherwise than disastrous.

There was no use striving to make the bird loosen his hold by hooting. If there had been any virtue in that sort of demonstration the old woman would hardly have been raised above the eaves of her shanty, for she was screaming in a manner that would have made a Modoc blush. The only thing that suggested itself,

and that rather hurriedly, was to get out my pencil and paper and take a sketch as she appeared passing over her cottage in the vulture's talons.

The blood, which at first forsook her cheeks through fear, was almost instantly forced back into her visage again by the pendant position of her head.

She beat the empty tin pan which she still retained in her hand, but the voracious and hunger-pinched vulture had no notion of relinquishing his hold on account of noise. On the contrary, he seemed to enjoy it, and with many a sturdy twitch and flap, and many an airy wheel, he still held his way toward a rugged promontory situated at the head of the valley. Fortunately, when he was twenty feet from the ground and about eighty rods from the cottage, the calico dress and undergarments in which mainly his talons were fastened gave out, and the liberated woman dropped on hands and knees in the muddy bed of the creek, over which the bird was passing at the time.

While hovering over her, about to pounce down upon her and try the elevating business again, a sheep-herder who had seen the bird approaching the cottage, gave him a dose of buckshot.

DUDLEY AND THE GREASED PIG.

BOIL-STRICKEN Job had his comforters, who, despite his timely injunction, "Oh, lay your hands upon your mouths, and thereby show your wisdom," would still drum in his ear, "Hear us, for we will speak." Poor old Falstaff had his evil genius in Bardolph, his impecunious follower with his "Lend me a shilling." And I have my burdensome "Jim Dudley," with his "Let me tell you a story." I was kept awake last night listening to his crazy yarn about the "greased pig," as if I cared anything about his villainous adventures.

"Oh, yes, that scrape with the greased pig? I never told you about it, eh? It's worth heerin', for that was a tearin' old race, and I came mi'ty

nigh gettin' shoved out of the village on account of it, too, now, I can tell ye. Down on me? Wal, I reckon you'd think so if you heered the hollerin' that was gwine on for awhile arter that race, some cryin' one thin' and some another. 'Tar and feather the cheat,' one would holler.

"'Lynch the blamed humbug!' another would shout.

"'Put him in a sack and h'ist him over the bridge!' would come from another quarter.

"A doctor was never so down on a patent medicine as they were on me arter that race, especially Parson Coolridge, who was one of the principal sufferers, yer see.

"It was May Day amongst 'em, and the hull village seemed to be out thar enjoyin' 'emselves. They had sack races and wheelbarrow races. That was the day blindfold Tom Moody ran the wheelbarrow through the grocer's window, and Old Shulkin knocked him down with a ham, and a dog ran away with it. He charged Tom

with the ham in the bill, along with the broken winder.

"They had a greased pole standin' thar with a ten-dollar greenback tacked on top of it, but no person could get within ten feet of the bill. The hungry crowds were standin' around all day gazin' longin'ly up at the flutterin' greenback, like dogs at a coon in a tree top.

"I didn't try the pole, but when they brought out the greased pig—a great, slab-sided critter, jest in good condition for racin',—I got sort o' interested in the performance. His tail was more'n a foot long, and it was greased until it would slip through a fellow's fingers like a newly caught eel.

"Several of the boys started arter him, but they'd jest make one catch, and before they were certain whether they had hold of it, they would go one way and the hog would go another. And then the crowd would holler.

"I was standin' thar a leanin' over the fence watchin' of 'em for some time, and I see the pig was in the habit of formin' a sort of ring

with his tail; leastwise he'd lap it over so that it e'enmost formed a knot—all it lacked was the end wanted drawin' through. I cal'lated that a feller with pooty nimble fingers could make a tie by jest slippin' his fingers through the ring and haulin' the end of the tail through. That would make a plaguey good knot, and prevent his hand from slippin' off. Arter thinkin' over it for some time, I concluded if I could git up a bet that would pay for the hardships that a feller would be likely to experience, I would try a catch anyhow.

"So I ses to Jake Swasey, who stood alongside of me, 'Jake, I believe that I can hold that pig until he gins out.'

"'Hold?' he says, surprised like and raisin' his eyebrows just that way; 'what's the matter of ye? hain't ye slept well? Ye mout as well try to hold old Nick by the tail as that big, slab-sided critter.'

"'Wal, now, jest wait a bit,' ses I; so I went on and told him what I cal'lated to do, and arter he looked awhile, he ses, 'Wal, go ahead, Jim,

I'll back ye. I reckon we can git any amount of odds so long as we keep the knot bus'ness to ourselves.'

"So pullin' off my coat I gin it to Jake to hold, and jumpin' on the fence, I hollered, 'I'll bet ten to twenty that I kin freeze to the pig's tail till he gins out!'

"Great fish-hooks! you ought to have seen 'em a-rustlin' towards me. I couldn't see anythin' but hands for five minutes, as they were holdin' of 'em up, and signalin', an' a-hollerin', 'I'll take that bet, Dudley, I'll take that bet!' I got rid of what money I had about me pooty soon, and Jake Swasey was jest a-spreadin' out his greenbacks like a paymaster, and arter he exhausted his treasury he started arter his sister to git what money she had. I hollered to him to come back—I was fearin' he'd tell her about the knot bus'ness; but he wasn't no fool, and knowed too well what gals are to trust her with any payin' secret.

"Old Judge Perkins was thar, jolly as a boy on the last day of school. Wal, he was holdin'

of the stakes, and his pockets were crammed chockfull of greenbacks. He was a pooty good friend of mine, and couldn't conceive

JUDGE PERKINS.

how in thunder I was a-gwine to get my money back.

"Beckonin' of me one side—'Dudley,' ses he, kind of low that way, and confidentially like,

'I know you're as hard to catch as an old trout with three broken hooks in its gill; but I can't help thinkin' a greased pig's-tail is a mi'ty slippery foundation to build hopes on.'

"'Never mind, Judge,' ses I, winkin', 'I can see my way through.'

"'Yes, Dudley,' he ses, a-shakin' of his head dubious like, 'that's what the fly ses when he's a-buttin' his head against the winder.'

"'Wal,' ses I, 'without the tail pulls out, I cal'late to travel mi'ty close in the wake of that swine for the next half-hour;' and with that I moved off to where the pig was standin' and listenin' to all that was gwine on.

"I fooled round him a little until I got betwixt him and the crowd, and when he flopped his tail over as I was tellin' ye, I made one desperate lunge, and made a go of it the fust time. I jest hauled the end through while he was turnin' round, and grabbin' hold above my hand, rolled it down into the tightest knot you ever sot eyes on. It was about two inches from the end of the tail, and he scolloped

around so amazin' lively nobody could see it. The crowd allowed I was hangin' on the straight tail, and they didn't know what to make of the performance anyhow.

"'Go it, piggy,' I ses to myself, just that way, 'I guess it's only a question of endurance now, as the gal said when she had the flea under the hot flatiron.'

"The gate was open, and arter a few circles around the lot, the hog p'inted for it, and away he went, pig fust and I arter. He ran helter-skelter under old Mother Sheehan, the fruit woman, jest as she was comin' through the gateway with a big basket of apples on each arm. I did hate like snakes to hoist the old lady, bounce me if I didn't! I would ruther have run around a mountain than do it, 'cause you see she had jest been gittin' off a bed of sickness that came nigh shroudin' her, and she wasn't prepared for a panic, by any means. I did my best to swing the critter around and git him off the notion of goin' through, but his mind was made up. Thar was plenty of room

outside for him to pass along without disturbin'

BAD FOR THE FRUIT BUSINESS.

the old lady, but a hog is a hog, you know—contrary the world over. Besides, he allowed

he could brush me off by the operation, but I wasn't so easily got rid of. The money was up, you see, and I had no choice but to follow where he led and stick to the rooter till he gin out. 'Where thou goest, I will go,' I ses to myself, rememberin' the passage in the Scriptures, and duckin' my head to follow him. I scrouched down as low as I could and keep on my feet; for I cal'lated, do my best, the old woman would git elevated pooty lively.

"She hollered as though a whole menagerie —elephants, kangaroos, snakes and all—had broke loose. Her sight wasn't any too clear, and the whole proceedin's had come upon her so sudden that she didn't exactly know what sort of an animal was thar. She would have been satisfied it was a hog if it hadn't taken so long to git through. I followed so close to his hams that she reckoned we both made one animal. The hog gin a snort when he started in to run the blockade, and she ses to herself, 'Thar goes a big hog,' but about the time she reckoned he had got out on the other side, I

come a humpin' and a boomin' along in my shirt sleeves, and gin her a second boost, throwin' the old woman completely off her pins and out of her calculations at once.

"She did holler good, thar's no mistake about that.

"The crowd hoorayed and applauded. The older ones of course sympathized with the poor old woman; but they could do nothin' more, 'cause the whole catastrophe come as sudden as an earthquake and nobody seemed to be to blame. I wasn't, and they all could see that plain enough. The young uns went for the scattered apples, but the pig and I kept right on attendin' to business. Now and agin he'd double back towards the crowd, and they'd commence scatterin' every which way, trampin' on each other's feet. Si Grope, the cashiered man-of-wars-man, stepped on Pat Cronin's bunion, and he responded by fetchin' the old salt a welt in the burr of the ear, and at it they went, tooth and nail, right thar. A few stopped to see fair play, but the heft of the

crowd, about three hundred, kept right on arter me and the hog.

"Jake Swasey managed to git up pooty nigh to us once and hollered, 'How are you makin' it, Jim?'

"'Fustrate,' I answered; 'I cal'late to stick to this swine through bush and bramble till I tire him out.'

"'That's the feelin',' he shouted, and with that we left him behind. The old judge was a puffin' and a blowin', strivin' his best to keep up, and for some time he actewally led the crowd, but he didn't hold out very long, but gradewelly sank to the rear.

"Rod Munnion, the tanner, stumbled and fell while crossin' the street. His false teeth dropped out into the dirt, and while he was scramblin' on all fours to git 'em ag'in, a feller named Welsh, who was clatterin' past, slapped his foot down and bent the plate out of all shape. Munnion snatched 'em up ag'in as quick as the foot riz, and wipin' 'em on his overalls as he ran, chucked 'em back into his

mouth ag'in, all twisted as they were. They did look awful though, stickin' straight out from his mouth, and pressin' his lip chock up ag'inst his nose. You couldn't understand

BOW-LEGGED SPINNY.

what he was sayin' any more than if he was Chinnook.

"Bow-legged Spinny, the cabbagin' tailor, was thar. He met the crowd while carryin'

home Squire Lockwood's new suit, and catchin' the excitement of the moment, tossed the package into Slawson's yard, and it bounded into the well quicker than 'scat.' He didn't know it though, but hollered to the old woman, as he ran past the window, to look arter the package until he got back. Not seein' any package, she allowed he was crazy as a cow with her head stuck in a barrel, and flew to boltin' of her doors pooty lively. He had been once to the Lunatic Asylum, you see, and they were still suspicious of him.

"The crowd thought to head us off by takin' down a narrow lane, and it was while they were in that that they began to surge ahead of Judge Perkins. He was awful quick-tempered, and pooty conceited, and when bow-legged Spinny was elbowin' past him he got mad. Catching the poor stitcher by the coat tail, he hollered: 'What! a miserable thread-needle machine claimin' precedence?' and with that he slung him more'n ten feet, landin' him on his back in a nook of the fence.

"That was the day they buried old Mrs. Redpath, that the doctors disagreed over. Dr. Looty had been doctorin' her for some time for bone disease. He said her backbone war decayin'. He didn't make much out of it though, and they got another doctor. The new feller said he understood the case thoroughly; he ridiculed the idea of bone disease, and went to work doctorin' for the liver complaint. He said it had stopped workin' and he was agwine to git it started ag'in. I reckon he'd have accomplished somethin' if she had lived long enough, but she died in the meantime. When they held a post-mortem, they found out the old woman, some time in her life, had swallered a fish-bone which never passed her stomach, and eventually it killed her.

"'Thar,' ses Dr. Looty, 'what did I tell ye? You'll admit, I reckon, my diagnosis of the disease was right arter all, only I made a slight error in locatin' the bone!'

"'Bone be splintered!' ses the other feller, 'hain't I bin workin' nigher the ailin' part than

you?' So they went on quackin' thar and disagreein' over her, until old Redpath got mad and hollered, 'You old melonheads, isn't it enough that I'm a widderer by your fumblin' malpractice, without havin' ye wranglin' over the old woman!' So he put 'em both out, and chucked their knives and saws arter 'em.

"But as I was sayin' that was the day of the funeral, and while it was proceedin' from the church to the buryin' ground with Parson Coolridge at the head, with his long white gown on, we hove in sight comin' tearin' down to'ards the parsonage. The minister was a feller that actewelly doted on flowers. When he wasn't copyin' his sermons, he was fussin' around among the posies. He had his gardin chock full of all kinds of plants and shrubs. Thar you could see the snapdragon from Ireland, the fu-chu from China, the snow-ball from Canada, the bachelor's button from Californy, and every kind you could mention.

"He had noticed the garden gate was open when the funeral passed, and it worried him

considerable. So when he heered the hootin' and hollerin', and got sight of the crowd surgin' down the street, and see the pig and I pointin' in the direction of the house, he couldn't go ahead nohow.

"Turnin' around to the pall-bearers, who were puffing along behind him, he ses, 'Ease your hands a minit, boys, and let the old woman rest 'till I run back and see if that Dudley is agwine to drive that hog into my gardin. Confound him!' he contin'ed, 'he's wuss to have around the neighborhood than the measles.' With that he started back on the run, his long white gown a-flyin' away out behind, the most comical lookin' thing you ever see. And he could run, that Parson Coolridge, in a way that was astonishin'. I reckon he hadn't stirred out of a walk before for thirty years, and yit he streaked it over the ground as though it was an every-day occurrence.

"His j'ints cracked and snapped with the unusual motion, like an old stairs in frosty weather, but he didn't mind that so long as he could git over the ground. He was thinkin' of

his favorite plants and the prospect of their gittin' stirred up and transplanted in a manner he

NIP AND TUCK.

wasn't prepared to approve. He did jerk back his elbows pooty spiteful, now I can tell you.

He tried to make the gate-way fust, and put in his best strides. But when he saw he couldn't, he hollered, 'Keep that hog out of my gardin, Dudley, or I'll take the law of ye.'

"'Don't git wrathy, Parson Coolridge,' I shouted. 'I can't prevent the pig from gwine in. I have hold of the rudder, but I'll be boosted if I can steer the ship.' With that, through the openin' we went, pig fust and me arter, and the hul crowd a clatterin' behind us. The judge was amongst 'em, but got left in the hind end of it, where the women were a-trottin'. The Parson's flowers went down with broken necks quicker than lightnin'. It wasn't more'n ten seconds until they were six inches under ground, for the hog kept a circlin' around and the hoorayin' crowd follerin' arter, payin' no more attention to the Parson than if he had been a young 'un a-runnin' around. When they saw the crowd, the pall-bearers and most of the people who were jest follerin' the remains through sympathy, turned back on the run and left the mourners standin' thar by the coffin.

"Oh! it was the most excitin' time the village ever seed. The ground was too soft in the gardin for the pig to git around well, and pooty soon he gin out. I was awful tired, too, and was hangin' a dead weight on him for the last ten minutes.

"When the boys see the knot on the tail you ought to hear 'em a-hollerin', 'Bets off! bets off!' They were set on claimin' a foul, and surrounded the old judge, demandin' thar money.

"But, as the crowd was increasin' and the Parson was e'enmost crazy, the judge told 'em to come with him to the Court-house—he wouldn't decide nothin' in the gardin. As the hog couldn't walk, the judge took his tobacco knife and cut the tail off and took it along with him to introduce as proof. He decided in my favor. He said that I had held on to the tail and touched nothin' else, and if I managed to tie a knot while runnin' I had performed a feat never before heard of in the country, so he paid over the money.

"But Parson Coolridge was the most worked up of any of 'em. He had legal advice on the matter, but the lawyer told him to gin it up, for the judge was on my side. Besides, he shouldn't have left the gate open, if he didn't want the pig to go in thar. Arter a while he gin up the notion of suin' me, but while he stopped in the village he never got over it.

"The boys had pictures chalked up on the fences and shop doors, so that wherever you'd look you'd see sketches of the Parson runnin' back from the funeral, and me a holdin' on to the pig's tail. He paid out more'n ten dollars in small sums to one boy, hirin' him to go round and rub out the pictures wherever he'd happen to see 'em. But every time the Parson would start out through the village, thar on some fence or door, or side of a buildin', would be the same strikin' picture of him, a streakin' it to head off the hog, so he would start the rubbin'-out boy arter that one.

"One evenin' he happened to ketch that self-same little rascal hard at work chalkin' out the

identical sketch on the cooper's shop door, and the Parson was so bilin' mad he chased him all

MORE LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT.

over the village. The young speculator had bin carryin' on a lively business, but arter that discovery thar was a sudden fallin' away in his

income. I tell ye it made a plag'y stir thar for a while, and I reckon if Judge Perkins hadn't been on my side I'd have been obliged to git out of the place."

MY DRIVE TO THE CLIFF.

I AM wofully out of humor, and what is worse, out of pocket, and have just been settling a bill for repairs to a buggy which was knocked out of kilter on the Cliff House road the other day. At the present writing I feel that it will be some time before I take the chances of injuring another. The moon may fill her horn and wane again, the seals howl, and the ocean roar, but I will hardly indulge in the luxury of a drive to the beach for many a day to come. I had a couple of ladies with me. Splendid company ladies are —so long as they have unlimited confidence in your skill as a driver. But they try one's patience after they lose faith, and want to get

the lines in their own hands every time you chance to run a wheel into the ditch, or accidentally climb over a pig or calf. Those who were with me on that occasion are not particularly loud in their praise of my driving. The fact is, I didn't acquit myself in a manner calculated to draw down encomiums in showers upon my head. I drove a span tnat day. They were called high-strung animals. But I don't like high-strung horses any more. If they would only run along the track like a locomotive, I could hold the ribbons as gracefully as anybody; but I am very much opposed to all of their little by-plays. This getting scared at a floating thistle-down, or grasshopper swinging on a straw, is something I don't approve of in a horse. There is no reason in it; no profit accrues from it.

But my trotters were frightened at different objects at the same moment—one at a snail peacefully pursuing his way across the road, and the other at a butterfly winging his wabbling flight along the ditch. At once they be-

came unmanageable, and vied with each other in extravagant antics. From the first the ladies had no very exalted opinion of my manner of handling the lines. Even before we were well under way I had the misfortune to run down a calf. Then a Newfoundland dog thought to stop the buggy by taking hold of one of the hubs, but he made a mis-dive, and shoving his head between the spokes, kept us company for twenty rods without any effort on his part whatever. I also ran over a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks (the Irishman escaped with a crushed hat), and overthrew an apple woman's stand while turning a corner. I can yet hear ringing in my ear the shouts and execrations of the old vendor, when she saw the wheels mounting her baskets and squeezing the cider out of her choicest bellflowers. Until I passed the next street I could look back and see the old lady in her embarrassing situation. There she sat, caught under the broken table, and kicking about wildly, in frantic efforts to free herself, while her bonnet was knocked askew by the

fall and stuck on one side of her head in the most jaunty position imaginable.

At this point the horses became more fright-

SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSING.

ened, and commenced cutting up strange didos. Things were getting badly mixed, so much so that one horse turned his head to the dasher.

The ladies took a hurried view of the situation, and voting me an incompetent driver, began to

BADLY MIXED.

desert me by back-action movements over the rear end of the buggy.

I shall always think that I could have managed the animals without any difficulty if they had not both been frightened at the same time. But with one bucking like a Mexican plug, evidently bent on crawling under the buggy, and the other seemingly striving to reach the stars by an invisible ladder, they were indeed difficult to control.

My companions concluded they had sufficient buggy riding for one day, and took the cars into town, while I patched up the harness as best I could, and returned to the livery stable, fully concurring with the women folks that as a driver I was not a success, and that hereafter promenades would suit me better.

DUDLEY'S FIGHT WITH THE TEXAN.

THE poor cur, kicked and scalded during the day, at night can lie and lick his sores in peace. The scudding hare that can hold out ahead of the baying beagles, until black Hecate waves her wand between the hunters and the hunted, may hope to shake them off. The aeronaut, tiring of the clamor here below, can rise above the busy haunts of men and hold sweet communion with the gods in quiet. But I, alas, find no escape from the inexorable plague, "Jim Dudley."

He comes upon me like a thief in the night and mars my rest. Within the holy sanctuary, even, he whispers in mine ear. Through the busy marts and thoroughfares he haunts me

still; and tells of fights and hair-breadth escapes, with all the glibness of an old battle-scarred veteran who has primed his firelock in three campaigns. He talks of drawing deadly weapons as a dentist would of drawing teeth. In all likelihood the fellow never drew a weapon in his life, except, perhaps, at a raffle. I had long noticed a scar on "Jim's" forehead, but never ventured to ask him how he got it, fearing a story would follow. Last night he detected me looking inquiringly, and without any query on my part the following infliction fell upon me:—

"You see that scar that looks somethin' like a wrinkle, over my left eyebrow, don't ye? Wal, you can't guess how I come by that. Cow kicked me? No, not by a long chalk, nor a hoss nuther. I got that scar the summer I was gwine through Texas. I'll not forget how I got it, nuther, in a hurry, for I never did have sech a narrow dodge since the night dad's old house burned down and I got out through the cellar drain.

"I was travelin' towards the border of Texas, gwine away back of Waco, and arter I got as far as cars would take me I set out on hossback. One evenin', jest as I was gettin' into a small village, my hoss got one of his legs into a hole in the road, and fallin' over, broke it snap off below the knee. I felt mi'ty bad over it, because I didn't have any too much money about me; but I had to leave him thar and go into the village on foot, carryin' the saddle along, for I cal'lated to git another animal the next day and continue my journey. I put up for the night at a small hotel, and thar was quite a number of fellers a settin' around the bar-room talkin'; but amongst 'em was one big, ugly-looking villain, with a glass eye that was continewally droppin' out and rollin' across the floor like a marble. Pupil up and pupil down, it would move along under chairs and tables, the most comical lookin' thing you ever sot eyes on. He would walk after the truant, glarin' around with the other eye as though watchin' to see if anybody was laughin' at him. Then

he would pick it up and chuck it back into his head ag'in, as if it was a pipe that had dropped out of his mouth.

BILL AFTER HIS GLASS EYE.

"He seemed to be a bully amongst 'em, for when any of the other fellows went to pass they circled around him, somethin' like a woman around a hoss standin' on the sidewalk. I

judged by that they were skeered of him, and didn't want to git anywhere near his corns lest they might accidentally touch 'em.

"I sat thar watchin' of him for some time, and at last, while he was leanin' on the counter beatin' time with his fingers on top of it, a feller come in and called for somethin' to drink.

"The bar-tender gin him the bottle and he poured out a drink and left the glass settin' on the counter, while he turned around to drop his quid of terbacker. As he was doin' it the big, bully-lookin' customer h'isted the glass, drained it right thar, and smacked and licked his lips arter it as though wishin' thar was more of it,—somethin' like a young widder arter ye give her a kiss.

"The feller that ordered the drink turned back, wipin' his mouth, gettin' ready to swaller. When he see the empty glass he riz up sort of indignantly, and was agwine to say or do somethin', but when he see who it was, he changed his mind pooty sudden, and settlin' down about six inches, turned around and jest slid away

easy like out of the room. As he was gwine out I could see his ears looked as though they were freezin', for they were gettin' whiter and

THE MINISTERIAL-LOOKING MAN.

whiter as he moved along down the steps. As I was thinkin' about it, a ministerial-lookin' man come edgin' up to me and ses:—

"'You're a stranger in this quarter, I believe,

and let me gin you a little advice; it may prove valuable to ye before you git away from yer.'

"'Why, what's the matter?' I asked, wonderin' what he was comin' at, 'have you got the smallpox in the house?' I contin'ed.

"'Smallpox!' he answered. 'Wuss nor that, stranger; for the love of peace,' he contin'ed, 'keep clear of that feller at the counter. Let him hev his way. You mout as well undertake to cross a crater as him in any of his bullyin' tantrums. Now mind I'm tellin' ye. If his eye falls out, don't laugh at it, don't betray yer emotions.

"'If he steps on yer corns, take it as if old Jupiter hisself had reached down his foot and trod on ye, and you'll come out of it better than if you *did* object, a mi'ty sight.'

"'Who is he?' I inquired.

"'Why, that's Bill Cranebow,—Glass-eyed Bill, they call him. He's had more fights over that glass eye of his'n than ever a dog had over a sheep's shank.

"'Everybody's aféared of him. They hate

him wuss than a lawyer does a peacemaker. No one who knows him wants to undertake the job of gettin' away with him; they'd ruther let it out to strangers. Oh! he's lightnin' at a fight, for all he looks so clumsy. What the butcher is with the cleaver, that Glass-eyed Bill is with the bowie-knife. He knows jest where to strike to open a jint or git betwixt two ribs. You'd think to see him at it, he had practiced for twenty years with some old doctor, by the way he can disarrange the "house we live in," as the poet ses.'

"'Wal, that's sort of curious,' I ses; 'ain't thar no person around this section that has had any experience at the cuttin' business?' He's only human, I reckon. If he gits a poke between wind and water he's as likely to wilt as anybody else, isn't he?' I ses, jokin'ly, jest that way.

"'Thunder and mud!' exclaimed the ministerial-lookin' man.' 'You've bin used to fightin' with women, I reckon. Lose his strength? You mout as well try to kill the strength of a

red pepper cuttin' it up, as that feller. Why, I've seen that Glass-eyed Bill in some of his fights yer, when he was so cut and slashed apart that you could see his in'ards workin' like a watch. And I'll be called a down-east noodle, if he didn't stand up to his work like a barber until he got through with his man. He likes to fight in a dark room best though, 'cause thar's no chance of gittin' on the blind side of him thar; and the landlord not long ago fixed up one on purpose to accommodate him, he had so much fightin' to do. He'll work a quarrel out of the least thing. Laughin' at his eye rollin' off is as certain a way of gettin' into trouble as runnin' ag'inst a wasp's nest.

"'Though he smokes like a coalpit himself, I knowed him to pick a quarrel with a young Georgian and kill him, because he happened to send a whiff of smoke in the direction whar he was settin'. Ever since that, whenever he comes into the room, you'll see the fellers a-pluckin' and a-snappin' thar pipes out of thar mouths and crammin' 'em into thar pockets or

under thar coat-tails—anywhere to git 'em out of sight, like boys who are just learnin' the habit when they sight thar dad a-comin' along.

"'Take my advice and keep away from him, for he's dead certain to pick a muss with strangers, as they ginnerally resent his insults. Plague on him!' he contin'ed, 'I wish he'd go away from the door, I want to git out; but it's not good policy to go a-scrougin' past him while he's lookin' so alfired glum.' With that the old man went quietly over to a cheer in the corner and sat down—somethin' the same as a monkey does when a larger one is dropped into the cage.

"I went to bed pooty early that night, as I was plaguey tired. In the mornin' I learned thar had been a fight in the dark room betwixt Glass-eyed Bill and a Tuscaloosan. Bill, as usual, had killed his man. I began to wonder whether I'd git into some scrape or another before I'd leave, and as there was to be an auction sale of horses and mules that mornin'

right thar at the hotel, I concluded to make a purchase and git away as soon as possible.

"I bid two or three times on horses, but they run 'em up too high. At last they fetched out a big mule, and thinkin' that would be jest the thing, I went for him pooty strong, and succeeded in gettin' him. Glass-eyed Bill had bin settin' on the door step thar, and didn't seem to be takin' any part in the biddin'; but when I went to lead the mule off, he hollered:—

"'Whar are ye a-gwine with that critter? Leave him standin' thar, please; I kin attend to him myself, I reckon.'

"'Wal,' ses I, jest slow and easy, that way, for I wanted to keep down my rizin' temper, knowin' what I was when I got mad, 'if I'm any judge of auctioneerin', the mule is mine, and I cal'late to lead him away when and whar I please.'

"Just then the same old ministerial-lookin' man come chuckin' and pullin' at my coat, and ses he, 'I'm takin' ruinous risks in speakin' to ye now,' he ses; 'but I tell ye again, don't cross him; let him have the mule, or you'll

expire quicker than a spark when it drops into a b'ilin' pot. He doesn't want the mule no more than a husband wants two mothers-in-law; but he's jest pinin' to git ye into a muss, and he doesn't see any way of doin' it without he disputes the mule with ye. Let him have it, or it'll be wuss for ye; now mind what I'm tellin' ye.'

"'No, I'll be shot if I will!' I answered. 'He ain't a-gwine to wipe his hoofs on me until —arter I'm dead, anyhow.' And with that I began to move away with the critter, when Glass-eyed Bill jumped up from whar he was settin' and shouted pooty snappishly like, 'Hold on thar! drop that rope, unless you want to collapse so quick that one-half of ye will be in etarnity before the other half knows thar's anythin' amiss.'

"'On what groun's do ye claim the critter!' I asked, jest a-b'ilin' inside, but keepin' sort of cool outwardly.

"'Words doesn't amount to a woman's sneeze in settlin' a matter of this kind,' answered old Glass-eye,

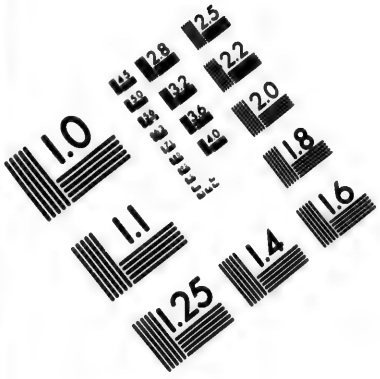
"'What does, then?' I inquired, quite innocent like, as though I didn't know what he meant; though I did know sure enuff what he was drivin' at.

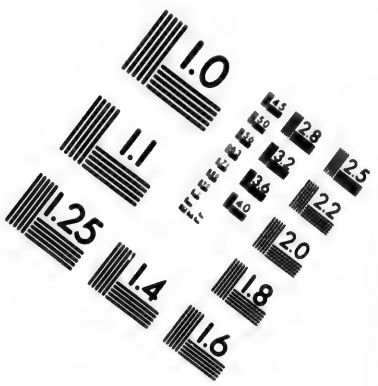
"'This does!' he answered, rizin' up and puttin' his hand behind him, as I do now, and jerkin' out a rippin' great knife about as big as the colter of a plow. 'That's the sort of a thing to settle disputes with. No gentlemen will argue a case while he's got an arbiter like that to leave it to,' he contin'ed, a-slappin' it down flatways into the palm of his left hand as he spoke, and bringin' an echo from an old barn that stood near.

"I see the bystanders began to turn pale as whitewashed chimneys, and commenced lookin' at the ground as though huntin' for straws or splinters to pick thar teeth with, but they only wanted some excuse to git away.

"'Supposin' I should pull out a knife about seventeen inches and a half long,' I ses, jest that way, 'what then?'

"'It's jest exactly the thing I want to see,' he





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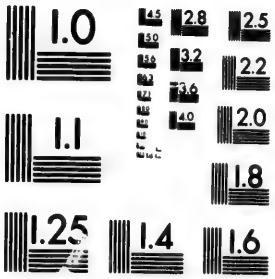
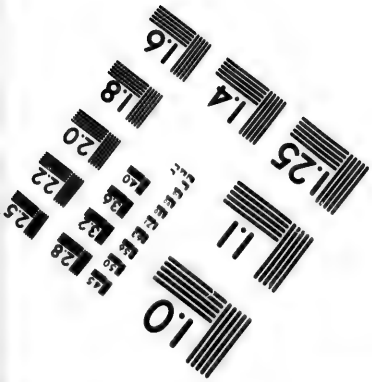
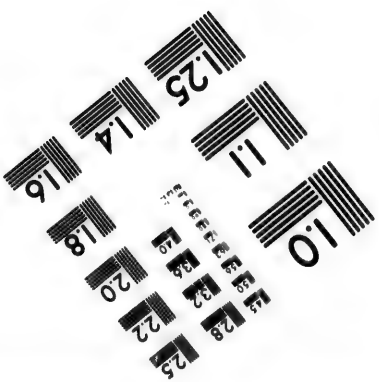






answered quickly. 'A young mother was never more tickled when she discovered the fust tooth a-peepin' out of her young un's gums, than I am when I see a knife comin' out of its sheath in a feller's hand.'

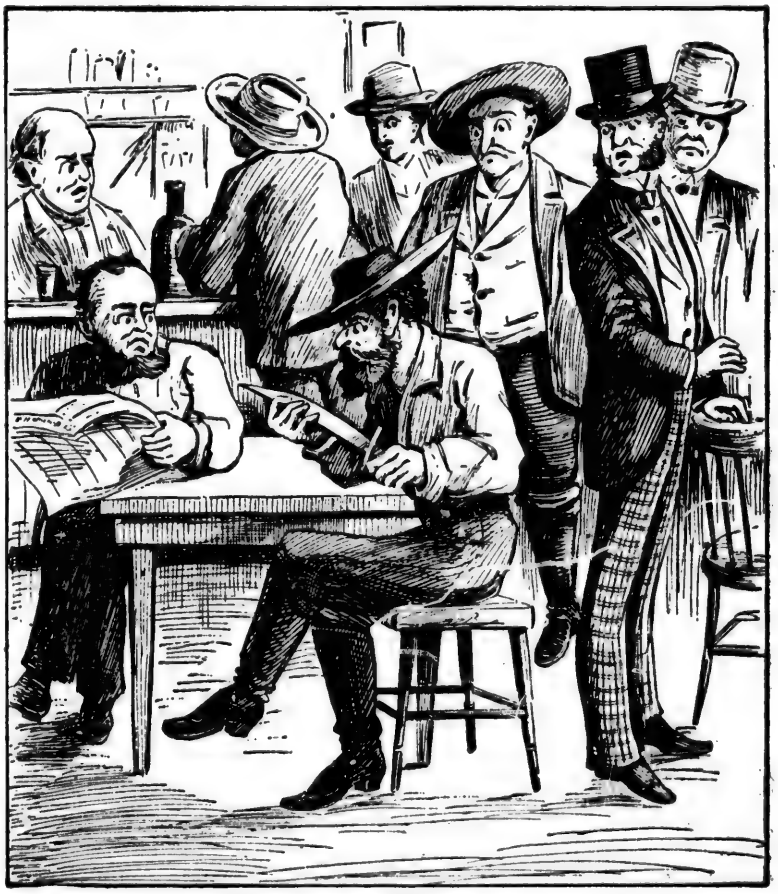
"'Wal, I reckon you must have been brought up in a fightin' settlement,' I ses, jest like that, for I couldn't hardly keep from jokin', he seemed so amazin' eager.

"'Come, which'll ye do? gin up the mule or fight? You've got to do one or t'other,' he ses, impatiently, as he stooped to pick up his glass eye, which jest then drooped out and was a-rollin' under the hoss trough.

"'Wal,' I ses, 'I ain't perticularly stuck arter fightin', but it's bad enough for a feller to squirt his terbacker juice onto you, without wantin' to rub it in; and if it'll be any accommodation to ye, I'll fight fust and then take the mule arterwards.'

"'Enough sed,' he answered, just short that way; and then turnin' to the landlord who was

standin' in the door, he asked, 'Is the dark room ready for use?'



STARTLING DISCLOSURES.

"'No, not quite,' he answered; 'thar's some pieces of that long Tuscaloosan lyin' around in

thar yet, I believe, but I'll attend to removin' them right away,' and he started off with a bucket and dust-pan.

"So we all went into the bar-room, and staid round thar waitin' until the place would be prepared. While we were thar, Glass-eyed Bill pulled out his knife, and commenced to draw it backwards and forwards over his boot-leg, as though to git a fine edge on it.

"'Wall, you can whet your great scythe blade,' I ses to myself, kind of low that way, for I allowed he was doing it to skeer me. 'It ain't allers the longest-horned cow that does the most hookin'. Prehaps my old terbacker shaver has got p'int enough on it to inaugurate a new passage to the interior if it *won't* cut a har.'

"Arter a while he leaned over to a feller that sat by the table, and while runnin' his thumb sort of feelin'ly along the edge of the knife, he ses: 'The man I bought this from in Galveston assured me it was the best of steel; but he lied, I reckon, for I turned the edge of it last night on that long Tuscaloosan's ribs. Yet

that's not to be much wondered at, arter all, for I do believe he had as many ribs as a snake. I thought I never would succeed in gettin' the blade betwixt' em. Arter I got him down in the corner and his knife away from him, I commenced jabbin' at his armpit, and I prospected the hull away down to his kidney, before I could git in far enough to let his dinner loose.'

"Gewillikins! when I heered him talkin' like that, didn't I begin to squirm aud fidget around on my cheer! I wished then I had never seen the place, more especially the long-eared mule. But I see I was in for it, as the boy said when he got his head stuck in the cream jar. Thar was no way of gittin' out without comin' right down to beggin' off, and I was too consumin' proud to do that, you know, if I was sartain of bein' cut up into as many pieces as a boardin'-house pie.

"Jest then the landlord came back and sed the room was ready, but remarked that it was a leetle slippery yet. He sed, for a lean man he never did see a feller that had so much blood

into him as that Tuscaloosan had. Beckonin' me to the counter he ses:—

"'You mout as well settle your bill now before you go in thar; it may be more satisfactory to you to have the settlin' of your own affairs, and it'll save me the trouble of huntin' over your effects arter you're dead.'

"'All right,' I ses, 'now, if you say so; but it's ginnerally admitted that sure things sometimes git mi'ty slippery all to wunst, and perhaps somebody's goggles may prove blue in the mornin' that were bought for green uns at night.'

"I didn't want to let any of 'em think I was skeered, though, by jingo! I felt sartin of bein' minced up, and the cold chills were just streakin' all over me.

"So we started for the room, which was about twelve feet square and dark as pitch.

"The landlord held the door open until we were in opposite corners with our knives out, Then he shut and locked it and left us to work out our own salvation, as the missionary did the

South Sea Islanders when he overheerd 'em talkin' about the best way of cookin' him the next mornin'.

"Wasn't it dark in thar though? and still? you could have heered a lizard a-breathin' in thar, it was so quiet.

"I allowed Glass-eyed Bill was expectin' that I would go a-shufflin' and a-huntin' around for him, but I had no sich foolish notion. I cal'lated if thar was any findin' to be done he'd have to do it, for I was detarmined to stand right thar till I'd drop in my tracks before I'd go a-s'archin' around for him.

"I commenced breathin' about twice a minute, and not makin' any more noise at it than a wall-bug, nuther. But for all that I heered him a-movin' over towards me. I'll allers think that Cranebow had a nose onto him like a setter dog, for he somehow or another got right over thar whar I was standin'. Pooty soon I felt somethin' a-stingin' along my forehead thar, and I suspected at once that it was the knife that was feelin' around for me; so I reckoned

it wouldn't be long until he was a-proddin' of it somewhere else, and like the boy with the candy bag, I cal'lated the fust poke was everythin'; so I made one sudden and detarmined plunge and a sort of upward rip, at the same time, cal'latin' to do all the damage I could right at once while I was about it.

"He heered me start, and thought to squat down before I got the knife into him I reckon. Though his intentions were good he only spread the disaster, like the gal who tried to put the fire out with the corn broom, for as he was gwine down the knife was rizin', and the result was truly astonishin'. I'll be smashed if he didn't fly open from eend to eend like a ripe pea pod. It was done so alfired quick too, that he didn't realize how bad he was hurt I think. Ses he, 'We'll try that over ag'in, stranger.' As he spoke, he started to git up, but fell away seemin'ly in two different directions.

"'Not on this side, we won't,' I ses, as I went huntin' around for the door.

"I was surprised as much as him at the way things had turned out, for when I stepped into that room I looked on it as steppin' into another world. When the door was found I commenced knockin', and pooty soon the landlord came and opened it. He couldn't see me at fust, but allowed it was the bully that was thar, of course, and ses he:—

"'You made pooty quick work of it this time; that feller won't want to buy any more mules arter this, I take it.'

"'No,' ses I, steppin' out, 'nor claim a critter that doesn't belong to him nuther.'

"'What!' he cried, jumpin' back with a look upon his face that told me at once he was mi'ty displeased at the way things war developin', 'is it you? whar's Glass-eyed Bill?' he contin'ed, shadin' his eyes with his hand and peerin' into the darkness.

"'He's lyin' around in thar somewhar,' I answered careless like, jest that way. 'The head-half of him is nigh the door here, paralyzed, I reckon, but the leg part is somewhere over in

the corner thar whar ye hear the kickin'; you mout as well be gettin' yer bucket and dust-pan ready, for you'll have quite a job gettin' all the pieces together ag'in, I'm thinkin',' I contin'ed, just that indifferent way, and walkin' out towards the bar-room as I spoke.

"You never did see a feller so set back in your life. He looked at me as though I had as many heads onto me as the beast we read about in the Scripters. I'll allers believe that he was in cahoot with old Glass-eye, and jist kept him thar to pick quarrels with strangers so they could have the pickin' over of thar effects.

"Arter washin' my hands and plasterin' up the cut on my forehead a little, I went out and saddled the mule, and the crowd all came out to see me gwine off. I reckon if I had stopped in the village I could have had things about my own way for some time. Before I rode off I turned round to 'em and ses:—

"'When you git so frightened of a bully

ag'in that you daren't sneeze within forty feet of him, jest send for me, and I'll open him up ready for saltin' while you'd be wipin' your mouth.'

A TERRIBLE NOSE.

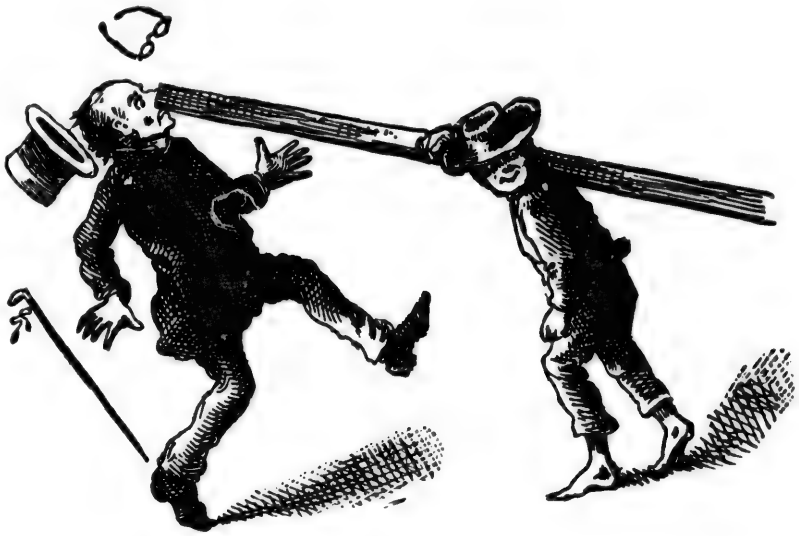
I WAS to-day brought in contact with an old gentleman named Bickerstaff, who keeps a crockery store in the village where I am visiting. This Bickerstaff is the unfortunate possessor of the queerest-looking nose I have yet encountered.

It was not the original intention of Providence that he should follow such a proboscis through life, for there was a time when he, like other men, had a forerunner ornamental as well as useful. But through an accident, the nose he now bears in all its deformity was shoved upon him.

It seems one day, while furiously pursuing a little urchin who had mischievously put a stone

through a glass jar by the door, he ran his face against the end of a scantling a boy was carrying past on his shoulder, and set his nose well up on his forehead in a triangular lump.

Strange to say, no inducements that the surgeon could hold out served to coax it back to



BUSTING HIS BUGLE.

its former position. His wife, who was young, and rather prepossessing in appearance, worried terribly about it. She finally left him, and went to live with her mother, and immediately set about obtaining a divorce from him.

She would, in all probability, have obtained it if she had not died before the case was properly laid before the commissioners; because she was capable of doing better, and when you come to see the nose with which she wished to sever her connections, you could hardly blame her. Old Bickerstaff, to tell the honest truth, did look like the very old Nick in masquerade costume.

His nose, as it reposed between his eyebrows, displayed an enormous pair of nostrils large as front-door keyholes. At a short distance a person would think he had four eyes in his head. He was the living terror of the school children who daily passed his place of business. They either scurried past on the run, or with their hands over their eyes.

Even among creeping infants—who had often shrunk back from the threshold as old Bickerstaff passed the door—he was known as the Boo; and there was no danger of them crawling into the street while he remained in the vicinity.

Nervously-inclined women also avoided him. They would cut across the road when they saw him coming toward them, or turn back, feeling their pockets as though they had forgotten something, and hurry back to go round some other way.

Dogs never barked at him. If they happened to be engaged in that pastime when he hove in sight, they would slope off the demonstration into a yelp. And as if they had suddenly recollected that they were wanted at home about that time, they tucked their tails between their legs and dusted away at a lively rate. Hitched horses even snorted lustily and pulled hard upon their halters when old Bickerstaff shuffled by.

The old gentleman had a pew in the church directly in front of the pulpit, and the first time he attended divine worship after his nose had been set up, he threw the minister out of his discourse altogether. He couldn't keep run of what he wanted to say, no way he could fix it.

He had Jonah swallowing the whale, instead of the whale doing the job for Jonah.

No matter how much he endeavored to keep his eyes in some other direction, they would invariably wander back to rest upon that terrible sight, and then he would be off the track again in a twinkling. The next day the trustees of the church waited on Bickerstaff, and in the most polite manner possible requested him to exchange his pew for one farther removed from the pulpit.

The old fellow—who, by the way, had considerable temper—flew off the handle at once, and in the most unchristian-like language denounced the church and the doctrine that would draw the line of demarkation between fair faces and plain.

He informed the trustees if the parson didn't like the looks of his congregation, he could turn his pulpit around facing the other way. Yet, though he was rough in his speech, and given to storming considerably when his pride was touched, he was not altogether lacking in

those qualities which go far to make up your real man; and when the trustees offered to give him the side pew *rent free*, his voice at once grew low, and in a becoming manner he accepted the situation. After that things were not quite as bad. The minister occasionally got a quartering view of him, but the odd-looking disfigurement didn't strike him with full force. Still, I was informed, the Reverend gentleman's discourse was principally addressed to the hearers on the other side of the church thereafter.

But—to his credit be it mentioned—he always turned in the direction of old Bickerstaff when he closed his eyes in prayer.

DUDLEY'S FIGHT WITH DR. TWEEZER.

JIM DUDLEY called again last night, and, as usual, bored me with one of his yarns.

I overshot myself by mentioning to him how low he stood in the estimation of Doctor Tweezer, for that brought down the following upon my head:—

"Dr. Tweezer didn't speak very highly of me, eh! Wal, 'tain't to be wondered at when you know how I wrought upon his feelin's once. When a feller has to go around among his patients for more'n two weeks with a beefsteak the size of a hearth-rug tied to his face, as *he* did, he ain't agwine to hurt himself eulogizin' the person who set him off,—not much

"Ever fight? wal, I reckon you'd think so if

you had seen the Doctor's yard arter we got through turnin' the chips over thar. *He* can fight, and squirm like a cat with her tail in a tongs, that Dr. Tweezer can.

"You see, the Doctor's place was alongside the widder Gezot's, and she had a numerous assortment of hens, specimens from cold ccuntries, with feathers clear down to thar toe nails; and others from bilin' hot districts, with no feathers at all onto 'em, 'ceptin' a few downy substitutes frillin' around the neck. They were continually a-gettin' into his garden and a sprawlin' round in the soft beds thar.

"He was pooty mad over it too, for he prided himself on razin' early vegetables, and two or three times he cautioned her to look arter her p'ultry, or he'd gin 'em a dose that would warm thar little gizzards for 'em, if he was any judge of drugs.

"The widder Gezot was a plaguey stirrin' little woman, one that was allers willin' to flounder ahead the best way she could. Being myself somewhat interested in the lady, I used

to ginerally chime in when she got into any difficulty.

"She soon told me what Dr. Tweezer said about the hens; so we set in, and poked 'em, and stuck feathers through their bills, and did all we could, except wringing their necks, to keep 'em out of his garden.

"But hens are hens, you know, and the warm sand makes 'em feel mi'ty nice, I reckon. They still managed to git through the fence, or over it, and hold caucuses in the Doctor's onion beds. One day, arter I had bin down town talkin' politics with the boys thar, I was settin' on the widder's door-step smokin' and musin' like, when I see her hens come a-rustlin' hum as though forty hawks were a-stirrin' 'em up. They p'inted straight for the water trough, and after takin' about two dips into it, commenced the wildest gymnastic feats you ever see, flip-flopin' around, stannin' on thar heads, and then on thar tails. Finally they quieted down, and turnin' feet up, lay thar dead as the chips around 'em.

"I more than suspected Dr. Tweezer had gin 'em a dose of arsenic or some other mi'ty

GOING FOR THE DOCTOR.

tellin' drug. So I jest riz up quietly and took a look over into his yard, and sure enough thar

he was, a-staggerin' and squirmin' around, a-holdin' of his sides, and e'enmost a-bustin' with in'ard laughter. Now this sort of upsot me. Not that I cared so much about the widder's chickens, but I didn't like to see a feller so mi'ty tickled over a mean trick. So I went prancin' around to the Doctor's yard pooty durned lively, a-pullin' off my coat as I ran. I cal'lated I couldn't devote much time to strippin' arter I got in thar.

"His back was towards me, and he never suspicioned I was comin', but stooped over, warpin' around and sort of unwittin'ly invitin' a kick.

"'It's mi'ty funny business, a pizenin' chickens, isn't it?' I ses, jest that way, and at the same time I gin him such a hoist that I sent him playin' leap-frog mor'n fifteen feet, and for a few moments I reckon he thought he had backed up ag'inst a batterin' ram.

"He was mi'ty cranky though, and turned round quicker than a dog when his tail is trod on.

"'Dudley,' he hollered, 'you meddlin' ruffian,

you've invoked the pest, so now look out for scabs,' and with that he came at me like a cluckin' hen at a strange dog. I see I was in for a lively time, as the boy said when he upset the bee hive. At it we went, ring and twist, duck and dodge, hop and catch it, round and round the yard like fightin' turkeys. I could play around him at boxin' like a cooper round a barrel, but he was grizzly on a hug, and could kick and gouge like a Mississippian.

"He went for my right eye like an Irishman for a ballot box. I'll be blowed if I didn't think I'd have to go one eye on it ever arterwards. Several times he had it stickin' out like a door knob. Finally, while he was a-fumblin' round, he accident'ly slipped his finger into my mouth, and I shut down on it mi'ty fast now I can tell you.

"'Fair play! fair play!' he hollered, 'no bitin'.'

"'Rats!' ses I, jest that way, 'twixt my teeth, 'all's grist that comes to my mill, I reckon, and with that I snapped it off at the second jint like

a radish. Jest then his wife, hearin' an unusual rustlin' and scrapin' around the yard, come a-runnin' to the door to see what was up. Woman like, without inquirin' into the particulars, she took sides to wunst, and started with a dish of hot water cal'latin' to gin me an al-fired scaldin'. Luckily she stumbled over the dog that was a-skelpin' into the house to git out of harm's way, and her own young un that was crawlin' around the floor munchin' dirt got the hottest bath it ever experienced. That gave her somethin' else to look arter, so that the Doctor and I had it out alone.

"Arter we had bin at it about fifteen minutes we held a sort of informal truce, just arter a simultaneous exchange of compliments, which left the Doctor layin' across the grindstone and me astride the pump. It was the first chance I had of gittin' a fair look at him since we started in. I see he was punished mi'ty bad. One eye was retirin' from active service pooty fast, while his face ginnerally looked as if he had bin bobbin' for pennies in a dish of tomato

sauce. I reckon he wasn't aware he presented such an appearance, for ses he:—

"'You're lookin' mi'ty bad, Dudley, and you mout as well gin up now as any time, for you'll eventually have to holler.'

"'If I looked one-half as bad as you do, Doctor, I would holler,' I answered.

"'I ginnerally have to look about this bad before my blood gits up to a fightin' heat,' he ses, detarminedly.

"'Wal,' ses I, 'I've fit at every election for the last five years, and last Fourth put the bully mate of Terre Haute into a coal bunker, blind as a bat, and I cal'late no derned pill-mixer is agwine to git away with me very bad.'

"You'll have to be born ag'in before you can whale me, Dudley,' he shouted, 'for I'll fight while there's enough blood left in me to lunch a stall-fed muskeeter.'

"'We both suck through the same straw then, Doctor,' ses I, 'for I cal'late to stick to you like a poor man's plaster to a beggar's ribs, or I'll have the worth of the widder's chickens out on

ye,' and with that I spit out his finger that I had forgot all about, and the hul time had bin chawin' like a piece of flag-root, I was so burnin' mad. I allers will think he would have gin up

HANDS UP AND HEADS DOWN.

the fight then, if he hadn't seen me spit out the finger. He looked down at his maimed hand and then at me, and the awful sight seemed to spur him on ag'in.

"'You cannibal varmint!' he hollered, as he edged up to me. 'I'll make head-cheese of ye!' and with that he made a pass at me; so at it we went ag'in, hotter than ever, hands up and heads down like fightin' wasps, round and about, over the goose-house and wheelbarrow spat-a-te-kick, roll-et-e-roll, and the hair was a flyin' and the teeth war a spinnin'. I got in a left-handed wipe on his chin while his mouth was open, swarin', and I made his jaws snap like a wolf trap, and sent one of his molars a buzzin' through the kitchen winder like a bullet from a Springfield muskit.

"I never knowed a man could lose so much blood and stand up arter it, until I had that fight with Dr. Tweezer. The blood was a-flyin' from him every which way, like the water from a sprinklin' cart, and yet he wouldn't holler.

"Arter a while he clinched and throwed me, but I managed to turn him, and commenced to shut off his supply of wind by twistin' his neck-tie; but jest as his tongue began to crop out promisin'ly, a couple of fellers drivin' by in a

wagon seen us, and they allowed that I was one of the Doctor's crazy patients that had got the better of him; so they come runnin' in with a long rope, and set in to tie me up right thar.

"The plaguey Doctor turned in to help 'em do it, too. I cussed, and hollered, and kicked off both boots, and broke two of my teeth a-grittin' of 'em, I was so consumin' mad. But it was no go; I was a-playin' a lone hand, with both bowers and the ace ag'inst me.

"The fust thing I knew they had me tied hand and foot, and h'isted into thar greasy old meat wagon with some dead hogs.

"'To the lock-up with him,' shouted the Doctor, jest bilin' with rage; 'he's crazy as a cow with her horns knocked off.' They took me thar sure enough, and I staid thar till midnight before the mistake was known. I was pooty well scratched up, but that Dr. Tweezer was the most horrid sight you ever did see.

"Arter that fight he looked as though he had been the subject in a dissectin' room, with at

least a dozen medical students peelin' and

ALAS! POOR DOCTOR.

hackin' of him in the interests of science. The

Doctor allowed that the erysipelas would set in, seein' thar were so many small veins busted in his face, so he painted it all over with scarlet iodine as a precautionary measure.

"He did look like the very old Nick, and no mistake. His face was fearfully puffed up, you see, and his nose was knocked clear away round to one side. His mouth in particular was a study that a feller couldn't git familiar with. It was a problem that the more you looked into the more your ideas got confused. It was swelled and twisted and run around, out of all shape and proportion.

"He had the terriblest time you ever heard of gittin' his victuals into it and fairly started down his throat. Thar he would sit at the table, explorin' about for fully five minutes strivin' to make the harbor, and when he couldn't fetch it, he would draw the spoon back and look at it a while, plannin' another expedition. He knew where his mouth *ought* to be, you see, and where it *had* been a few hours before, and to be obliged to canvass the whole

of his head to find it was somethin' he wasn't accustomed to.

"It seemed as if he never would git through jabbin' the spoon about his face, and when he would finally strike the openin', it would be away round on one side of his head, so much so, in fact, that a person would think he was pourin' the soup into his ear. He would be all hunkadory then durin' the remainder of that meal, but the next time he would come to the table, the same performance would have to be gone through with.

"He couldn't keep run of the thing, nohow. It was here to-day and somewhere else to-morrow, like a wrinkle in a shirt.

"The swellin' kept shiftin' and undulatin' about continually, down in one place and up in another, all within an hour, and that would shove the mouth away down along the neck somewhere, or clear across to the other side of the head, perhaps.

"The family would be sittin' thar eatin' no more than he was, they would be so busily

engaged watchin' his singular manœuverin', and it would make him so roarin' mad that he would send 'em all away from the table.

"He tried to eat by the aid of a small lookin' glass, but that didn't work any better than goin' it blind. When he saw how disfigured every feature was, his appetite would begin to git away from him pooty lively, and he would sling the glass into the corner, and fall to denouncin' me like a crazy bush-whacker.

"The yard, too, was a sight; everythin' in it was painted and scratched and painted ag'in.

"Old Mrs. Sharron—who was allers a-smellin' around about butcherin' time, on the lookout for a fresh morsel—was gwine by the Doctor's the next mornin', and she noticed the blood and ha'r a-stickin' to the chips and pump handle, and she allowed he had killed his spring pig, so she dropped in to ask him for the ears and a piece of the liver.

"The Doctor thought she was runnin' him on his late skirmish, and you never see a man fly into such a passion in all your born days.

"He jumped up and pulled his pizen pump out of a drawer, and ses he: 'You old faded remnant! you scollop! you creasy old cinder of an incendi'ry fire!' he contin'ed, jest that way, 'I'll gin ye jest seven seconds to git out of my house in, or I'll hoist the gizzard out of ye mi'ty quick!'

"Jehominy! wasn't she skeered, though? You never see a cat git from under a stove quicker when a pot biles over, than she got out of that house.

"So Dr. Tweezer didn't speak very highly of me, eh? Wal, now you kind o' know the reason, don't ye?"

GOING UP THE SPOUT.

RATS and mice, like ourselves, often labor at a great disadvantage while endeavoring to make a livelihood. They often make a miss of it altogether by not knowing the proper time to set out upon an expedition. Their life is a perpetual skirmish. They have to take chances and be upon their guard continually. Their mortal enemy and dread, the cat, may be asleep in the fourth story, and the poor mouse knows not of it as he looks wistfully across the intervening space between the ash barrel and the basement stairs; but after weighing the chances of escape or capture, he scurries across the opening with as much haste

as though the sharp claws of pussy were raking the stunted fur from his wiry tail.

The sun may pour down its genial rays and the planks which his way lies over be warm and inviting, but he cannot loiter to enjoy its warmth or survey the beauties of nature. Oh! who would be a mouse! sigh I, as I sit and ponder over his life of inherent fear and uncertainty.

He seems to have no confidence in himself. His actions are like those of an inferior checker player. Shove about as he may, the chances are he will soon regret the manœuvre, and wish himself safely back again at the starting point.

Everything about the premises seems to be after him. He regards the old blacking-brush that lies under the bench with looks of suspicion for hours together, and dare not risk a scamper past. He takes it for a horrid cat, quietly and patiently biding her time. He retires into his hole and waits fully an hour before peeping out again; but there it sits, to blast his sight and

cause a cold thrill to run along his little spine. The fact that it does not change its position does not in the least weaken his mistrust; on the contrary, it rather strengthens it. "It is so cat-like," he says to himself, "for it to be sitting there motionless." In the handle projecting from one end he very naturally thinks he recognizes the tail, and at this new discovery he backs into his hole again in great trepidation.

He feels certain now that he was right in his suspicions. Another wait follows. On again emerging, there it lies as before; and if that mouse was profane, and had a soul to hazard, it would undoubtedly hazard it, and roundly berate that brush through compressed teeth.

It takes but little to set a poor mouse into a perfect fluster. Down rolls a stick of wood from the pile, and Mr. Mouse, nibbling at the other corner of the shed, jumps at least eight feet in the direction of his hole. The wind blows down the clothes-line stick, and simultaneous with its fall upon the planks the heart, liver and lights of the poor mouse seem to be

running a steeple-chase to see which can jump from his mouth first. Away he scurries across the yard, so fast, that though your eyes were endeavoring to keep up with him all the way, you merely know *something* has been moving, but can only surmise what.

We think sometimes the trials and disappointments of humanity are great, but dear me! what are they compared to the miseries of these poor creatures. From their hardships deliver me! For all their care and caution, they do so often miscalculate. This is evidenced by the number of times our old cat enters the house with her mouth full, and her eyes sparkling with pride.

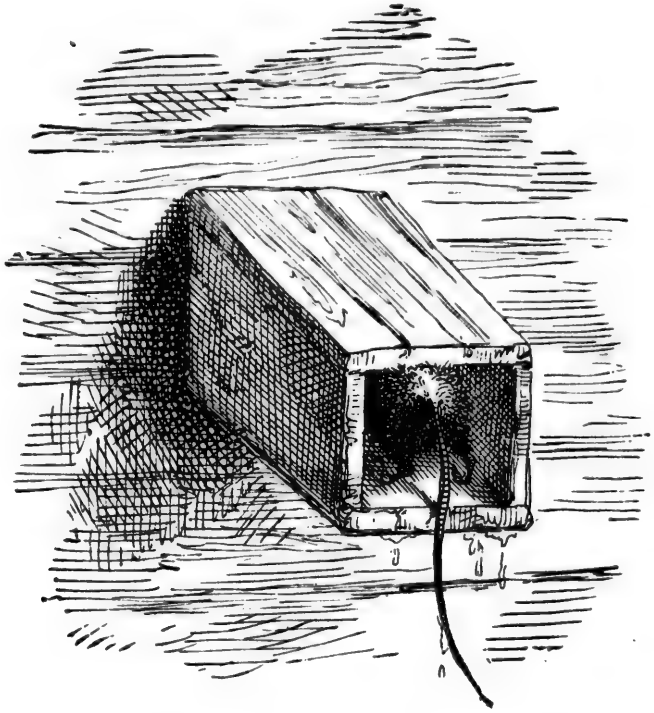
There is nothing so very degrading or humiliating in a cat's life, and the thought of becoming a cat does not make one shudder as does the thought of becoming a mouse. A good household cat does not occupy such a very bad position in life after all; by *good* I mean an excellent mouser, one never guilty of letting a mouse escape after having the second wipe at

him; no scraggy creature, with stove-singed back and scalloped ears, but a well-behaved, home-loving animal. The lot of such a creature is preferable to that of some men whom I have met in life, that is, if there were no rude children in the house. There is always some drawback; a cat is peculiarly blessed that lives in a house where there are no children; it seems to be counted as one of the family almost, and its life, though short, is certainly a happy one. But ah! these reckless children, that snatch up Tommy by the tail as they would a sauce-pan, and as though the tail was actually intended for a handle. On second thought, the life of a cat is not so very pleasant after all.

For the last half hour I have been deeply interested in the manœuvres of a large rat in the yard of an adjacent house. He has made three unsuccessful attempts to go up the sink-spout. Thrice has he glided up the slippery incline until the tip of his long tail disappeared from view, but as often has he beat a hasty

retreat, assisted on his downward way by a rushing torrent of hot dish-water.

He is a determined fellow, however, and



ON A RAID.

sticks to an enterprise with the spirit and pertinacity of a world-seeking Columbus, or a prison-breaking Monte Cristo. No doubt the hungry edge of appetite is whetted by the

strong effluvium arising from Limburger cheese (the people are Germans), that fills the whole atmosphere with an odor truly agreeable to the rodent nose, every time the pantry door is opened. The cheese has been lately stirred up, I presume, by the trenchant knife of paterfamilias, and consequently the poor hunger-pinched rat is allured up the spout at this inopportune hour, while the servant girl is washing the dishes.

Every living creature has its weakness. The horse whinnies when the oats draw nigh, and forgets the galling collar. Sheep, that at other times will not come within gunshot, grow tame and unsuspicious when the salt is shaken in the pan.

The hog has a penchant for clover-roots, or wherefore does the rusted wire ring ornament his nose? Is it there because it is the fashion? Ask the farmer.

And undoubtedly cheese is the weakness of the rat family. It is their aim, and often their end, too. It is the shrine to bow down before

which the rat will jeopardize his life every hour of the twenty-four.

He dreams of it. In his fitful slumbers he beholds it ranged around him tier on tier, as in a great store room, and not a cat within forty leagues. He is in the rat's Paradise, and happy. No deceptive poisons that consume the stomach, no insidious, subtle traps, yawning ready to clutch the unsuspecting victim, surround him. He is safe and at peace, and would dwell there forever and forever in one unbroken endless night. But the heavy rumbling of a dray startles him, for all sweet dreams have their wakings; alas! that it is so! He wakes, and where is he? Under the wet sidewalk, drenched and tousled with the drippings of the day's rain, with nothing for breakfast but a dry onion peel, the prog of the previous night, which nothing but a forty-eight hours' fast could induce him to seize. Ah, me! what chances the fellow has to take in order to secure sufficient sustenance to keep life and body together.

"Honor pricks me on," soliloquized old Sir John, on the field of Shrewsbury, when he withdrew from the general clash and rendering up of souls, to breathe a spell, and moralize upon the insignificance of Fame, or Honor, as against the value of life. But nothing pricks on the poor rat but his craving little digestive organs. The mill is crying out for grists, the hopper is empty, the stone still turning, and something must be done, and that quickly.

No honor is attached to the expedition, and even though he should succeed in making the "inning," which is doubtful, all that can be said is, that he has "gone up the spout," and in the common acceptation of the saying, that is certainly nothing to be very highly elated over.

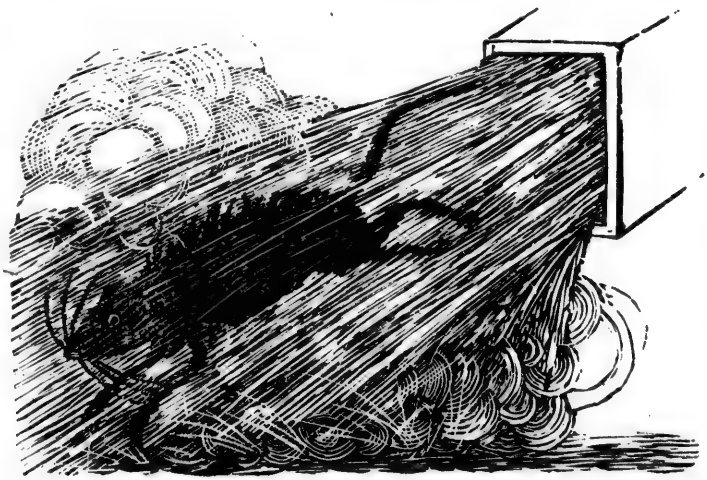
I actually feel ashamed when I think of the many projects I have abandoned through life, because I met with slight reverses. Here before me is this poor water-soaked rat, his hair still smoking from his recent scald, emerging once more from behind the wood box, deter-

mined to solve the problem of the sink-spout or perish in the attempt. A grim smile of resolution seems to part his pointed features, as he moves quietly up to the dripping conduit from which he lately scampered with steaming ribs.

They may talk of deeds of noble daring, of vaulting the breach, or traversing the wilds; but for sterling courage, for indomitable perseverance and pluck, commend me to this little adventurer in my neighbor's yard. In the face of three scalding inundations, he ventures again upon the expedition, unshaken, unsubdued, unterrified. He takes more chances and subjects himself to more risks in ascending that spout than old Samuel de Champlain in exploring up the St. Lawrence among the Iroquois.

What if the large flea-pasturing dog lying indolently in the yard would rouse from the lethargic sleep that holds him, and for once make himself useful by thrusting his bristling muzzle up the orifice after the little explorer, thereby cutting off retreat in the event of

another disastrous deluge? The terrible result of such an action on the part of the dog is too painful and improbable to contemplate.



JIM DUDLEY'S SERMON.

HEREAFTER I shall have no faith in reports. Last week I heard that Jim Dudley had left the city, and was congratulating myself on at last escaping him. But my congratulations were premature. Last night he called upon me, and kept me in torture for fully two hours; at a time, too, when I should have been asleep. But what cared he for that? The scoundrel! there was no shaking him off. He sticks to a person like mortar to a brick. I had to sit and listen, though I do honestly believe every word the fellow uttered was an unqualified lie; but he swears to its truth, and how can I prove it otherwise. It is better to take it as it comes, and ask no questions for conscience' sake.

"I never told you about the sermon I preached over in Misertown one Sunday. I had a time of it thar and no mistake. Hold on a minute and I'll tell you how it was.

SOMETHING NEW.

"You see, Gil Bizby—that plaguey shirk, I never mention his name but what I feel like trouncin' of him—but he was a genius though and no foolin' about it, a natural born inventor, chock full of notions as a toy shop.

"But somehow or another he never could bring anythin' to a payin' focus. Allers whittlin' and borin' and plannin' around though. Wherever you'd meet him he'd be haulin' out of his pocket some old drawin', with more wheels and contrivances pictured out on it than you could think of in a twelve hours' dream. He never could git the cap-sheaf onto his endeavor though. Allers somethin' amiss; a wheel too many, or another one wantin', or too many cogs to have the thing work just right.

"He invented a contrivance for pluckin' chickens.

"That was a rustler. He shoved the fowls through a machine somethin' like a corn sheller, an gin 'em an electric shock while passin' along, and shot 'em out of a spout at t'other end of the machine as bare as weavers' shuttles. He didn't make anythin' out of it though. He had to chuck 'em through while alive, you see, and that clashed with the law. When he took the machine down to the city to introduce it to the pultry dealers, the society

fellers who look out for the interests of dumb critters got arter him and sewed him up. They put a reef in his jib pooty quick now, I tell you.

"They were passin' along through the market one day, and they saw Gil just a humpin' himself showin' off the apparatus to the market men. He was crankin' and pumpin' away, like a sailor when there's fifteen feet of water in the hold and still rizin', and the chickens were a screamin' and a scootin' through the contrivance, close as if they were run on a string head ag'inst tail, and just a cloud of feathers hoverin' around over it. Didn't they fasten on to that Gil Bizby though? They snatched him up quicker than if he had been hoss-stealin', and confiscated his plucker, and tucked an alfired heavy fine onto him besides.

"Meetin' with such poor encouragement in that direction he went back to Sculleyville, and set out to invent a thunderin' great machine for layin' cobble-stones. That was just him all over; allers startin' in to git up some outlandish lookin' thing. This machine was a crusher and

no gettin' 'round it. It was fearful enough to make a cow slip her cud, I'll be shot if it wasn't. It looked somethin' like Noah's ark set on wheels and filled with all kinds of machinery.

"He started in to experiment one moonlight night in front of the court house, but got the main belt crossed or somethin', I disremember just what, and Jerusalem! in less than ten minutes he ran the whole population out to the foothills in thar night-clothes. There wasn't no stoppin' the consarned thing. Poor Gil was knocked senseless at the first revolution, and nobody else knowed how to control it. It rolled the whole length of the square, tearin' up the stones it had pounded down the day before and sendin' of 'em buzzin' over the village in all directions.

"No home was sacred, and no head was safe, as the poet has it. Poor old Mrs. Scooley lived just long enough to learn this, and no longer. She was goin' once too often to git her pitcher filled at the corner grocery that night, and a stone took her in the small of the back as she

was enterin' the door, and it h'isted her clear over the counter on top of a barrel; it's true

THE DOCTOR'S SCOURGE.

as I'm tellin' it to you. Poor old body; she was the pioneer female of the village too. The first woman to wash a shirt in Sculleyville.

But arter all, the town wasn't much loser by her passin' away.

"She was a sort of panicky old critter anyhow, always scary about catchin' the smallpox or any other prevailin' disease that come around. The old village physician said he would ruther see the very old scratch makin' toward him on the street than old Mrs. Scooley.

"Comin' from church or market, as the case might be, she would fasten onto him like a wood-tick to a leaf, and he couldn't git rid of her nohow. She would have him time her pulse right thar on the sidewalk; and be a shovin' of her tongue out for his inspection. And she did have such an unlimited, wallopin' great tongue too; it seemed when she was shovin' of it out as though she was actewelly disgorgin' her liver. It's so, by Jingo! People would be a stoppin' and standin' thar, wonderin' what was the matter with the old gal—that is, people that didn't know her peculiarities; though most everybody in the village had seen her standin' in that position so often, that they

would be more surprised to see her with her tongue in her mouth than projectin' out in the rain.

"The old Doctor used to be terribly annoyed. He would say, kind of hurriedly like, because he would be itchin' to git away from her:

"'Oh! you're all right I reckon, Mrs. Scooley; but you had better be a gittin' along home, and not stand too long in the cold air, with so much of your vital organs exposed to the weather; the result may be fearful if not fatal!'

"That would ginnerally start her off pooty lively towards her shanty. They say the first time the Doctor saw her tongue he was surprised so much that he looked actewelly skeered. Ses he: 'I've been nigh unto eight and thirty years a practicin' physician, and until this moment I flattered myself that I was familiar with all the ins and outs of the profession. But I begin to think I gin over the dissectin' knife too soon, for here's somethin' that I was not prepared for.'

"But that's not tellin' you about the sermon, is it? but when I mentioned that Gil Bizby, I sort of wandered off arter him and his contrivances. Wal, as I was about to tell you, Gil and I were saunterin' around Misertown one Sunday, and we saw any number of gals goin' into the school-house where the preachin' was carried on. So we concluded to step in and git a better look at some of 'em. I didn't know many of the people round thar, but from what I heard I judged they were the meanest, close-fistedest set of sinners that ever had the gospel dispensed with amongst 'em.

"I understood they had treated their minister plaguey mean when he fust come thar to look arter them. Thar was no regular place for him to stop, you see, and they agreed amongst themselves to take turns a keepin' him until they could get a house up for him. He was one of those young, easy, green kind of fellers that had seemin'ly never been so far away from home before but what he could see the smoke of his father's chimney, or smell his mother's

corn-dodgers burnin'. And they soon took advantage of it, and sort of played button with him, shovin' him around from one to another as though he was too hot to hold.

"He fust went to a feller by the name of Wigglewort. Ses Wig, 'I'm really very sorry, Mr. Sermonslice, but we unfortunately have no accommodations for you at present. We have no place for you to sleep 'thout we put you in the barn, and the nights are ruther cold for that, besides the rats might annoy you. Sorry you happened to come just at this time, of all others the most embarrassin.' It's not but what I would like to have you stop with us; I would, indeed, Mr. Sermonslice, consider it an honor to have you.'

"The minister, takin' his books under his arm, started out into the night as though his life depended upon the most prompt kind of action. He wasn't within hailin' inside of two minutes. He went over and succeeded in gettin' lodgin's with a feller named Joe Grimsby, who lived over by Frog Marsh.

"Joe was too derned lazy to 'do his own prayin', and while the parson stopped with him he got rid of it. They do say he was the laziest old curmudgeon that ever turned up his

JOE GRIMSBY.

eyes. He used to say a praar at the beginnin' of the month, and on the followin' nights he would always allude to it in a sort of matter-of-fact way. 'You know my feelin's towards ye

Nothin' hid from ye I reckon. I haven't changed my sentiments yet. If I do I'll let ye know of it. I'll keep nothin' back from you, though it should take the har off.' He would go on in that business-like way, and the hul time be a crawlin' into bed.

"Wal, as I was goin' to tell you, Gil and I poked into the buildin', and sat down thar amongst the congregation.

"The minister hadn't come yet, and pooty soon an old feller got up, and ses he, 'It may be the minister has had a late breakfast and will not git here for some time yet. In the meantime, as it's a dry season and our crops need a shower of rain, we mout as well have a little prayin' goin' on. We can't do much harm anyhow, and we may be the means of bringin' down a good smart shower that will be money in our pockets in the long run.'

"He asked several to take hold and do somethin' in that way, but one had a cold, and another one was just gettin' over the mumps. And so on they went makin' excuses. Finally

the old feller turned to me, and ses he: 'Perhaps *you* would lead us, you look like one who has had some experience that way.'

"I thanked him for the compliment, but told him I was somethin' like the officers in the army—I would ruther foller than lead. But he stuck to me like a Jew to a customer. Arter a while I consented, and jest as I was about startin' in, a feller come in and said the minister had got a terrible ticklin' in his throat caused by partly swallowin' a har in the butter over to old Joe Grimsby's, and couldn't attend to his duties that day. So the old chap got up ag'in, and ses:—

"'We won't have any preachin' then, without some person present will volunteer to act in our pastor's place this mornin'.' But no one spoke up. 'Perhaps,' he ses, turnin' to me, 'you would favor us by conductin' the service, young man. You doubtless are competent to perform that duty.'

"This sort of got me. Then the thought struck me perhaps I'd make somethin' out of

'em by it. Besides I didn't want to plead ignorance right thar amongst 'em, so gettin' up, I ses: 'This is somewhat unexpected. Honors foller one another pooty fast.' With that I got into the pulpit and began to look down at 'em pooty seriously. Thar was no Bible on the desk, so I asked if thar was any person that would loan me one for the occasion.

"Some of 'em spoke up and said they had books, but were in the habit of keepin' 'em to foller along arter the minister, and correct him when he made a mistake. Besides they liked to see how he worked out the text. I looked at 'em some time pooty hard. I thought they beat anythin' I had come across for some time, and I had a good mind to git down ag'in, only I allowed they'd laugh at me. So I ses, 'All right. You can keep your books. I reckon I know enough by heart to git along with.' I then gin out somethin' for them to sing.

"'Short or long meter?' inquired the leader of the singers, who were settin' over in the corner. I didn't exactly understand him. As

I knowed he was in the habit of meetin' Sal Clippercut over to Mrs. Curry's every Sunday afternoon, I allowed he was longin' to meet her. I spoke up pooty sharp, and ses, 'You will please sing what I gin you to sing. I reckon you aren't longin', to meet her so bad but what you can wait until arter the service is over. She'll keep that long, I reckon, without spilin'. I know her. She isn't none of your Spring chickens nuther,' I contin'ed, just like that, and you ought to have seen the way he looked; and the gals commenced to snicker and crowd their handkerchiefs into thar mouths.

"One little red-faced critter that sat alongside of him tittered right out. Her mother, who was sittin' near by, jumped up and ses: 'Becky Jane, you go right strait hum this minute, and go to peelin' the 'taters for dinner.' But a feller who looked as though his mother had been a mullator, or even somethin' of a darker shade, got up and ses:

"The gal isn't to blame in the least. It's

that feller in the pulpit thar. I for one don't want to hear any more of his lingo.'

"'Wal, then, you can stuff wool in your ears,' I ses, 'and you won't have far to go to git it nuther,' I contin'ed, just that way, alludin' to his own har, which seemed pooty woolly.

"You ought to see how they looked, fust at him, then at me. He colored up, I reckon, but he was too black to show it. I heard him grit his teeth from whar I was standin'. He didn't say any more, but an old woman who was settin' near jumped up, and ses she:

"'The meetin'-house is turned into a thayeter! When a muntybank gets into the pulpit it is high time for respectable people to be movin'. I'll leave!' she exclaimed, pullin' her shawl around her shoulders and beginnin' to bustle out of her seat.

"'Wal, ye kin go!' I hollered, jest that way, for I was beginnin' to git sort of riled at the way things war a goin'. When I'm talkin' politics or arguin' over the merits of whisky, I can bear crossin' and any amount of contra-

diction. But right thar, where a feller had to be choice of his language, it was different business. 'Ye kin go,' I ses. 'We kin git along without you, I reckon. We're willin' to chance

TRUTH IS POWERFUL.

it, anyhow. Take your knittin' along; don't leave that behind,' I contin'ed, pointin' to the seat as though I saw it lyin' thar. I didn't though, but I wanted to give her a mi'ty hard

rub, for I suspected her piety was put on, and that she was displeased because nobody was noticin' her new bonnet.

"The hull congregation took it for granted that the knittin' *was* thar, and you ought to have seen 'em stretchin' and cranin' out thar necks as far as they could to get a look into the pew.

"One old feller that was settin' back pooty far, craned out kind of quarterin' ruther suddenly and his neck gin a crack like a bon bon. He commenced oh! ohin' and tryin' to git it back to its old position agin', but he couldn't make any headway until his wife went to rubbin' and chafin' of it, right thar.

"But that old woman, whew! She was as mad as a wet hen. She couldn't hardly find the door, she was so mixed up. When she finally got thar she turned round and straightenin' of herself up she ses, 'Young man!'— Before she got any further I broke in on her, for I judged she had a tongue that was hung in the middle. So I ses, 'That'll do, that'll do,

Mrs. You kin move along. You're disturbin' the peace of the congregation, and besides all that you're showin' your false teeth mi'ty bad in the bargain.'

"She got out arter that pooty lively, now I can tell you. I could see her as she went up the road towards her home, and two or three times she stopped and turnin' around acted as though she had half a mind to come back and try the hul thing over ag'in. But arter standin' thar a while thinkin' like a pig when it's listenin' to the grass takin' root, she would shake her head and move along up the turnpike as though she concluded she had enough of that kind of pie.

"This piece of performance sort of throwed me off the track. While I was standin' thar thinkin' where to start in with the discourse, Gil Bizby come a crawfishin' up the steps to one side of me and whisperin' ses, 'I say, Jim, you haven't got to chock blocks already, have ye?'

"'No,' I answered, 'I ain't got to chock blocks, but I've got the ropes twisted around

and things look ginnerally mixed jist now, I can tell ye.'

"'Wall, start in on the sermon at once then,' he urged, 'for they are gettin' mi'ty impatient now I can tell you. You've got to be doin' *somethin'* pooty quick. But whatever you do,'

MR. SPUDD.

he contin'ed, 'don't git up very high without havin' some idea how you are goin' to git down ag'in. Keep steerin' around waters that you've piloted over before. Remember a blind mouse shouldn't venture very far from its hole, especially if thar's a whole generation of cats watchin' of it.'

"With that he backed down to his seat ag'in, and took out his pencil and began to design a machine for pickin' the bones out of fish, on the fly-leaf of a book that was lyin' thar. So I started in on the sermon. It wasn't much of a sermon, to be sure. It was more like a lectur'. I couldn't think of any passages of scriptur' just then, so I gin 'em the line from the philosopher, 'Why does the frightened dog depress his tail when he runneth?'

"You ought to have seen 'em rustlin' and turnin' the leaves, huntin' to find the passage. One old feller by the name of Spudd commenced to paw over the pages, and his wife ses, 'Don't go that way; turn back to the Book of Job.' He looked round at her with his under lip stickin' out jest that way, arter wettin' of his thumb to start turnin' over ag'in, and ses, 'Job be biled and buttered! I kin pick old Solomon from amongst a thousand of 'em. He was sound on the goose, he was.'

"Two or three of 'em started in to ask me where the text was located, but I kept on talkin'

THE OLD INTERROGATOR.

right straight along, lookin' around to all of 'em at once and no one in particular. I didn't gin 'em a chance to stop me ag'in, or git a word in edgeways. One singular-lookin' old coon with a weed on his hat got up and stood signalin' of me, and waitin' and watchin' for a chance to ask me somethin.' But I never let on to see him. I reckon he stood thar five minutes with his finger up pointin' to attract my attention, and his mouth open so wide, that from my elevated position I could tell what he had swallowed for breakfast.

"I gin 'em a sort of ramblin' discourse, alludin' to the prevailin' passions, and errors of the age. Amongst other things I touched on jealousy a little,—I wanted to stir 'em up a trifle on that subject, because there was a great deal of jealousy in that neighborhood. The green-eyed monster was a-rantin' and a-ravin' round in a good many households, and as it ginnerally turns out, there was least cause for it where it was most prevailin'. One old feller was moved by the first remark. When I said

—quotin' from the poet—'Jealousy in the wife is wuss than trichina in the pork,' he leaned over to the man settin' in the next pew and ses, 'I can't tell you for the life of me whar he gits the passage, but it's the solid truth, anyhow.'

"So I went on and finished the sermon, or lectur' ruther, and then I ses, 'The choir will please sing the hymn beginnin' "Give, give, give to the needy," arter which I will pass around amongst the congregation and take up a collection for the benefit of the heathen in furrin parts.'

"Je-whitteker! You ought to have seen 'em turn around and look at each other when I said that. I can't describe it to you. I can't do the scene justiss. If I had told 'em I was goin' to stay with them through the season, I could hardly have started 'em to thinkin' any more than I did by tellin' 'em about that collection for the heathen in furrin parts.

"Arter two or three attempts the singin' began. I closed my eyes, and leanin' back in my chair minister-like, commenced to estimate

the probable yield of each pew. While I was thinkin' thar, and cal'latin' how much I would make by the preachin' business, I noticed the singin' dyin' out, and a dyin' out slowly like, as the prisoner said his hopes were when the sheriff was a-fumblin' around his neck adjustin' the rope. So I opened my eyes easy like, as though comin' back to earthly scenes reluctantly, and you can water my whiskey if I wasn't just in time to see ole Ned Scullet's coat-tails whiskin' around the door jamb, the hindmost rag of the congregation. Women and children and all were gone sure enough. On lookin' out of the winder I see 'em a scatterin' and a-hustlin and elbowin' themselves ahead of each other along the turnpike, as though thar was great danger in bein' left behind.

"Would you believe it, thar was that plaguey shirk Gil Bizby a-cranin' up the hill a-leadin' the crowd. I sat thar a while lookin' after 'em and then, comin' down, I began to look around a little, and pooty soon I noticed that several

of 'em left thar hats, they were in such a hurry to git out. So I selected a good one, only 'twas a little out of fashion, and puttin' it on I ses to myself, 'If you think I'm interested enough in your welfare here or hereafter to preach to you for nothin', you're mistaken, I reckon.' With that I walked out, but not until I had kicked the remainin' hats around the room pooty lively.

"The next day I noticed an old feller with a dilapidated beaver on, that looked as if it had done duty on a scarecrow for several seasons, sidlin' up to me, and circlin' around two or three times lookin' mi'ty close at my tile. I'll allers think it was his stove-pipe, but he was too much ashamed to come right out and lay claim to it."

MY NEIGHBOR WORSTED.

AS I look from my window I am surprised at the change the last half hour has wrought upon my neighbor and his immediate surroundings. At that time he emerged from the shed in which he keeps his extra household furniture, with a length of stove-pipe and an elbow under his arms. They were apparently just the things he needed to tone down the draught of his new stove, and shoot the sparks clear of the banker's eaves.

I think I never saw him look better-natured than at that moment. His face was clear and unruffled as a woodland pool. His children played around him with unsuspecting minds

and unlimited speech. The household cat, with all confidence in his noble nature, familiarly rubbed her ribs against his leg, as he for a moment stood deciding which end of the length to introduce to the elbow. Even the old hen roosting on the inclosure seemed to settle her head into her body with more than ordinary satisfaction as she regarded the complacent scene beneath her.

But half an hour ago all was peace, confidence and love, and now what a change is here! I hear the children, but see them not. Their plaintive wail reminds me how often laughter is the harbinger of tears. The hen, with ruffled feathers and outstretched neck, stands aloof upon the ridge of a distant dwelling. The household cat that had grown old in the family, and had good reason to believe herself privileged, purrs no more. She has painful reasons to think otherwise now, as she crouches in the most retired corner of the premises, assiduously applying whatever balm her tongue affords to injured parts. She

doubtless muses how heavier than an infant's spoon it is to feel an adult's boot.

Yet my neighbor was neither rash nor hasty.

He seemed the embodiment of perseverance, as he repeatedly offered that length of stove-pipe an elbow, which it, like a prudish maiden, provokingly refused. Soon the drops of perspiration began to stand upon his face and neck in large globes, and I knew that patience was oozing from every pore. I knew by the scattering children, the cackling hen, and the flying household cat, that the "rose-lipped cherubim," of which the poet sings, were abiding with him no longer.

Presently his wife came to his assistance with a case-knife, and for a time it seemed as though victory would crown their united efforts. Reinforcements turned the tide at Waterloo, and laid proud France at the mercy of Europe, and how often the assistancé from the mind or arm of a noble wife rolls back the enemy from the door. But reinforcements could not mend the

matter here. The poor woman soon retired from the scene with wounded fingers and damaged pride.

My neighbor himself has ceased to strive. Flattened, kicked, and abandoned, the pipes lie masters of the situation.

Ah! I am fully persuaded that neither depth of affliction, nor height of impudence, nor length of trial, nor breadth of argument, nor extravagance, nor parsimony, nor things in particular, nor things in general, can begin to compare, as triers of patience, with a couple of old frill-edged stove-pipes, that emphatically set their edge against a union.

A VISIT TO BENICIA.

TO-DAY I had occasion to visit Benicia. The place is situated on the Straits of Carquinez. Not far from the town the Government Arsenal and Barracks are situated. And as a striking proof of the loyal and law-abiding spirit of the citizens, I may mention the fact, that all the Government property above alluded to is defended by two soldiers, a corporal—who, by the way, has a wooden leg—and a high private.

While stopping there, I noticed they were engaged in the pleasurable task of firing a salute of twenty-one guns, in commemoration of Bunker Hill. They were having a busy time of it, for while the wooden-legged corporal

was loading and discharging the cannon, the private was forwarding the ammunition from the magazine—about a quarter of a mile distant—in a wheelbarrow. "If soldiers will do this in time of peace," I said to myself, "what would they not accomplish in time of war?" and I walked away from the spot, congratulating myself for having invested in Government bonds.

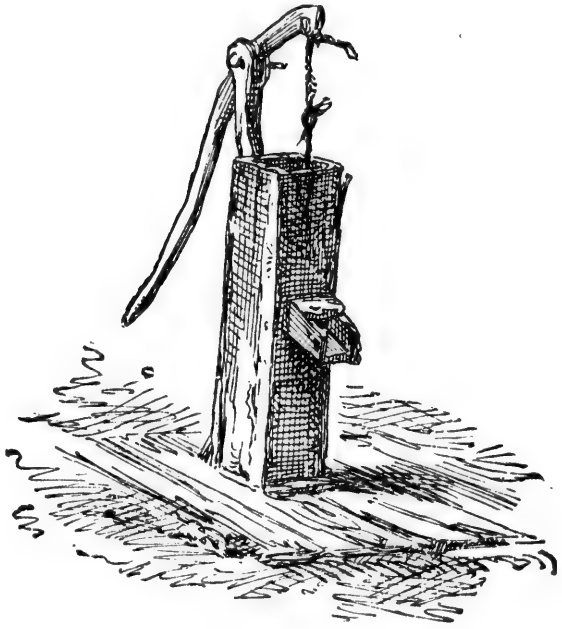
The town, in all likelihood, would never have been heard of outside of the State of California, had it not been for the brave "Benicia Boy." Here it was that he swung the blacksmith's heavy sledge, and practiced the first rudiments of the pugilistic profession, which subsequently gained him his world-wide notoriety.

Many of the citizens are yet pointed out to the visitor as parties who at some period of their life served as a sand bag on which the muscular "Boy" hardened his knuckles.

As I gazed upon the scattered village,—for it is no more,—I mused, how a man should come forth from such a paltry place to "awe" the

world. For as Goliath challenged the hosts of Israel, so came the brave "Benicia Boy" and dared creation's millions.

And as the youthful shepherd, afterwards



ONE OF HEENAN'S MEMENTOES.

king, rose up and smote the overweening giant with a stone, till his brain oozed forth, so from Albion's Isle a youthful "King" smote the Western champion in the midriff with his mawley, and all his wind gushed out!

After searching some time to discover the blacksmith shop where the pugilist used to work, I learned that it was long since torn down, and a church now occupied the site. But an old gentleman, who kept a small boarding-house, conducted me to an ancient pump, at which he said the "Boy" on several occasions bathed his nose after having a bout with some person who didn't let him have things all his own way, and there I wept my tears of tribute.

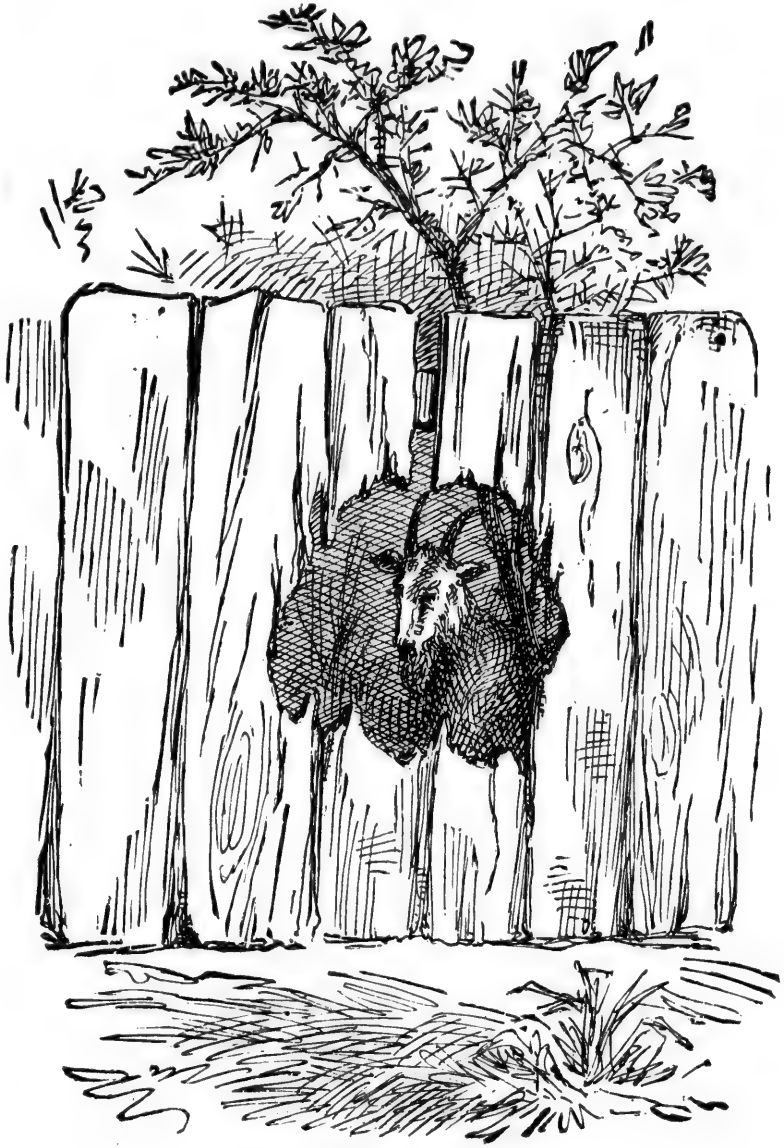
A large iron-bound boot-jack, set in a glass case, was shown to me by a saloon-keeper. He assured me, with this weapon the "Boy" had killed several cats belonging to the neighbors, which had disturbed his slumbers. This boot-jack had also caused the death of a mule, for on one occasion the pugilist hurled it with such violence at a cat that was scampering across the roof of a shed that the heavy missile went through the boards. A farmer's mule that was standing inside received the weapon behind the ear, and immediately went to gravel as though he had been felled with a sledge-hammer. The

farmer instituted a suit against the "Boy" to recover damages, but the friends of the pugilist made up a purse to satisfy the demand of the farmer, and the matter was hushed.

I was also shown a jagged hole in a high board fence, which, it is said, the "Boy" made one night while going home from a neighboring saloon.

It seems he had some trouble with a companion before leaving the saloon, and seeing his shadow dogging his steps, mistook it for the substance of his late antagonist; very naturally presuming that his intentions were anything but friendly, he turned hastily around and dissipated the obnoxious shadow by knocking it about fifteen feet into the garden.

The fence rattled and shook around the whole lot under the terrible blow. He made a hole in the boards through which a large goat could readily jump without sacrificing any of its hair by the performance, and permanently injured a good-sized pear tree that stood inside the inclosure, about three feet distant. The concus-



A SCIENTIFIC OPENING.

sion was terrible. A couple of turkeys that happened to be roosting in the tree at the time dropped from their limb as though shot through the head with a needle-gun. Never afterwards could they be induced to roost upon anything further from the ground than the cross-bar of a saw-horse or the handles of a wheel-barrow.

No doubt the town at one time had great expectations, as it formerly was the capital of the State. It is now a capital joke to see a person undertaking to walk through the town in the winter season, without faith strong enough or feet broad enough to support him upon the surface of the oceans of mud he will find himself gazing wistfully across.

On my way down a man was pointed out to me on the boat who is said to be the meanest man in his county. My informant assured me that when the mean individual's wife died last year, he borrowed a pair of forceps from the dentist at Benicia, and extracted all her gold-filled teeth. And on the morning prior to

her funeral he sat upon the door-step, hammer in hand, with a flat-iron upon his knees, cracking the teeth like English walnuts, and with a sewing awl extracting the filling from the cavities.

THE COUNTRYMAN'S TOOTH.

LAST evening, while sitting in a physician's office, I was amused by a countryman who entered the office to have a tooth extracted. The doctor took one of the old-fashioned "cant hooks" and went for the molar, but whether it was owing to lack of skill or the patient's ducking while the instrument was being adjusted, it became fixed directly between two teeth, and after a painful struggle, out they both were drawn. The operator saw he had taken out two masticators instead of one, and before the patient noticed the fact one was chucked under some papers lying upon the table by his side.

"Jerusalem!" cried the countryman, as soon

as he could speak. "I thought by the yankin' and the torturin' pain you had hitched the blamed thingamagig onto my backbone and was a snakin' it out. Why, bless my soul!" he continued, as he ran his tongue into the awful chasm. "Hain't you made a mistake, doctor, and pulled out the jaw instead of the tooth? Thar appears to be a ginneral cavin' in all around thar."

"Oh, no," said the doctor; "there is the tormentor, sir," and he held up the one tooth before the contorted face of the victim in triumph. "Your teeth pull out easy, sir, for their size," he continued, as he wiped his instruments and put them away.

"They do, eh?" he exclaimed. "Wal, dear help them that have teeth that come out hard. 'Taint all in the pullin', nuther, but the incredulous hole they leave ahind 'em when they do come. Why, my teeth seem as far apart as two Sundays to a laborin' man."

"The other teeth will crowd over after a while," said the doctor, encouragingly.

"It may be I'll git sort of used to it after a while," he replied, "but I'll be blowed to the moon, if it doesn't feel as though my tongue was wabblin' around in some other person's mouth about this time;" and he arose from the inquisitorial chair, paid the damages, and left the office.

A ROLLING STONE.

THIS afternoon, while climbing a steep hill that overlooks the bay, in company with a gentleman named Stone, I saw an illustration of the old maxim, "A rolling stone gathers no moss." We had almost completed the ascent, when Stone's feet slipped from under him and, striking upon his side, he commenced a rapid descent.

About four hundred feet of steep grade stretched before him without let or hindrance. I saw at a glance he was bound to pass over every inch of the space before he stopped. Onward he went, gathering speed as he proceeded, and catching wildly around him at every revolution; but, as there was nothing

growing upon the barren slope but stunted

A THROUGH PASSENGER.

grass or brittle moss, his efforts to "slow speed" were in vain. After he had made

about ten revolutions his hat came off, and for a short time the race between him and his tile was truly interesting. It would have been an even bet which would first reach the fence at the bottom of the hill. After making about half the distance, however, the hat swung in ahead of him.

Whether it was the wind acted upon it I couldn't tell, but Stone overhauled it and, passing over it, materially injured its form as a roller, by giving it an oblong shape, and soon left the crushed hat wabbling far behind. He turned neither to the right nor to the left, but rolled as straight down the hill as a saw-log down the bank of a river into a mill-pond. Goats nibbling in the vicinity paused in their repast and looked pitifully at the gentleman as he went tumbling by them, and evidently congratulated themselves on being goats, that feel at home on the steepest hillside that nature can present to their hoofs. When, in his mad career, my friend Stone would reach some intercepting shelf, he would bounce about three

feet into the air, and continue down the incline with increased velocity. Nor did he stop his brilliant course until he brought up whack against the fence.

Fortunately he was unhurt, but was so dizzy that everything was turning around him for an hour afterwards. He declares that though he should live until he becomes so old as to forget the way to his mouth, he has taken his last look at the city and the surrounding bay from the summit of that hill. And when we think of his last descent from that high altitude, we can hardly wonder at the declaration.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

AN amusing scene occurred this afternoon as I was coming up from the post-office. It was a case of mistaken identity. It seems a somewhat dissipated old Irish woman was deserted some weeks ago by her husband.

Through her domestic troubles and excessive drinking she at times becomes quite crazy,—so much so that her friends have to keep a constant watch over her to prevent her from doing mischief. She is very large and powerful, and when in one of her tantrums is no easy person to manage. It appears that when she has one of these crazy spells, she imagines she recognizes her husband's Milesian features in almost every face she looks upon.

This afternoon, while the crazy fit was upon her, she escaped from her keepers, and rushed into the street with dilated eyes and dishevelled hair. With sleeves rolled above the elbows and clenched hands, she charged up the street, looking right and left for some person on whom to fasten.

She was indeed ripe for an encounter, and nearly the first person she met was a prominent clergyman returning to his residence from the Mercantile Library, with his newly selected book under his arm. She stood for a moment directly in front of the minister, and riveted her red optics upon his face in an inquiring stare, which soon kindled into one of recognition.

Anticipating trouble, he attempted to pass around her and proceed quietly on his way.

But she was too quick for him.

Reaching out her long bare arm, she brought it around like the boom of a sloop, and with one wide sweep knocked his hat spinning to the sidewalk at her feet.

He stooped to pick it up again, and while bent in the act, she seized him by the hair with both hands, and giving a guttural laugh, not un-

THE CLERGYMAN IN LIMBO.

like the self-satisfied croak of a down East bull-frog, exclaimed:

"Ah! Barney, ye galavantin' spalpeen! ye can't desave me wid yer stove-pipe! So ye'd

dezart the wife o' yer boosome, would ye? ah, ha! come home wid me now, or I'll be afther takin' your durty ould scalp along wid me!"

A soft rabbit under the wide paw of a California lion, or a sparrow in the talons of a hawk, is not more utterly helpless than was the poor dominie in her terrible clutch. His position was anything but an enviable one. It actually seemed as if every hair upon his head was gathered and drawn into one mass, over which her muscular fingers held complete control.

He dropped his book and shouted loudly, partly through pain, and partly anger at seeing the fate of his fashionable hat, now lying under her great broad foot, flat as a German pancake.

His cries of fear only made the crazy woman more confident of her abilities. She commenced backing along the street, in the direction of home, and at every step, with an irresistible yank, she dragged the expostulating minister along with her over the uneven sidewalk.

She had snaked him along fully two rods in

this manner, and was making, to use a nautical phrase, such good stern-way that she was on the point of breaking into a trot, when her heel caught on the edge of a plank.

The result was terrible in the extreme.

She fell backwards, pulling the unfortunate captive to the sidewalk after her, where they gyrated in the most ludicrous positions imaginable.

A couple of gentlemen, emerging from a store at that instant, looked on the pair in blank astonishment for a moment. Recognizing their own gifted pastor, they ran to his assistance, and lost no time in raising him to his feet, and turning over the old crazy woman to an officer who happened at that moment to step out of a saloon.

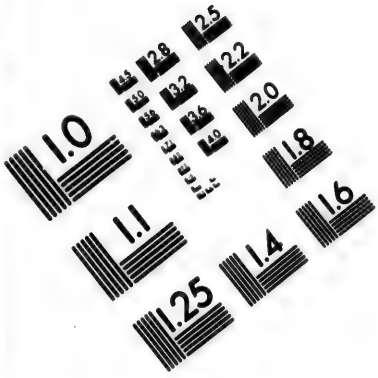
JIM DUDLEY'S RACE.

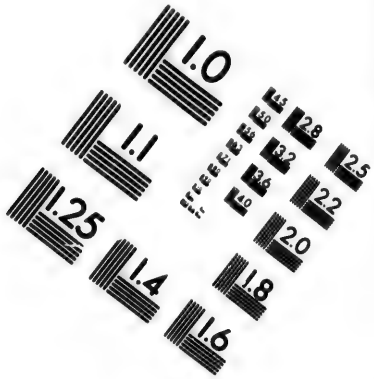
NOW that I am rid of my wild-cat mining stock, my aching teeth and inverted toe-nails, "Jim Dudley" turns up again with his stories and slang.

Last night he told about the fast team he once sported in Indiana, and I wager considerable that he never drove a horse in his life, except it was to the pound, that he might get half the fine. But this is the way he spun his yarn:—

"Did the boys tell you about the span I used to drive down at Grab Corners? No? wal, that's queer. I owned a mi'ty fast pair while I was stoppin' thar.

"You see, I fust had a four-year old hoss, and





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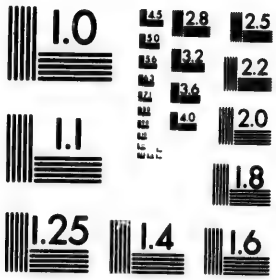
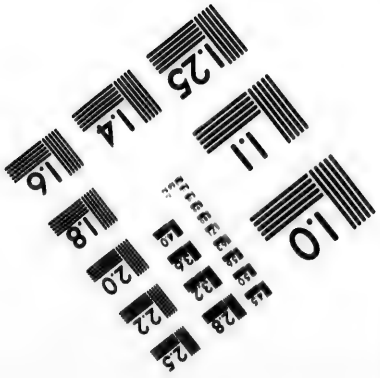




used to go buzzin' through the village like a streak o' lightnin'; and when I had jest enough whiskey aboard to make me feel a leetle reckless, I used to turn the corners on the two inner wheels and never make a miss of it.

"My ambition was to own a span, though. Arter a while I bought a young mare from Deacon Shovelridge. She was the homeliest lookin' critter, though, you ever sot eyes on. Her tail was as hairless as a garter snake. She was a basin-raised colt, and one mornin' she was standin' round whar the boys were makin' soap, and while backin' up to the blaze to git warm, her tail caught fire, and every spear of hair was burned off. It never came out agin, nuther.

"It made her look pooty bad, but I see the go was in her, and that was what I was arter. Durin' fly time I used to help her out of her troubles a leetle by fastenin' a heavy tassel to the end of her tail, and arter some practice she could fetch a fly off her ribs or fore shoulder e'enmost every pop.

"I got her pooty reasonable. The Deacon said he was actewally ashamed to go out with her, for the boys were allers a-hootin' arter him. Besides, the old codger seemed to have a likin' for me, and allers took my part when others were runnin' me down. The mare matched the young hoss fust rate. Both had hides like rhinoceroses, which sweat could never get through. They might be bilin' hot inside, but they never showed any signs of it outwardly.

"Arter a little trainin' they pulled together, and spatted it out as even as the wheels of a ferry boat. I used to make a commotion among the villagers when I turned out, for I could pass everythin' around the Corners; and you ought to have seen the fellers a-runnin' out to hold their hosses by the head when they see me comin', and the wimmin a-hollerin' and tuckin' up their skirts, and scuddin' arter their young uns as though a drove of Mexican cattle were a-comin' across the bridge.

"One day an old sport named Abe Drake, a sort of spreein' old bachelor, come over thar

from Illinois. He afterwards married a broken-winded old concert singer that used to be

ABE DRAKE.

squeakin' around there, and went to live in Hulltown. Wal, as I was sayin', he come over there and brought a spankin' fine team along.

They were amazin' nice-lookin' critters now, I can tell you; skins smooth and shiny as seals, and tails on 'em that actewally trailed in the dust behind. He allers had plenty of

KATE RYKERT.

money, and was continewally takin' the gals around to one place or another. He was ginerally considered the biggest cat on the wood-pile. We never came in contact when

we had our teams out till one day at a picnic in Gawley's Wood.

"That straw-headed Kate Rykert was thar. She was the rollickin', don't-care gal of the village, one of these tree-climbin', astride-ridin' critters, but a mi'ty good gal for all that, and handsome as a new fiddle. She was well up in the fine arts, but she could realize more genuine enjoyment chargin' through the pastur' astride the old mooly cow than she could by strummin' a pianer.

"Wal, there wasn't hardly a gal in the village that Abe Drake hadn't been a-spurrin' round, and he had sort o' commenced a-trampin' on his wing like around Kate Rykert about this time.

"It happened I had a sort of weakness that way myself, and I didn't like his maneuverin' any too well now, I kin assure you. He couldn't make much out of Kate, though. She liked fast horses and a splurge, but she wasn't one of those gals that would marry an

old pair of breeches jest because there was greenbacks in the pockets.

"But as I was remarkin', that day while the picnic was breakin' up, we all got talkin' about a ball that was comin' off the followin' week down at Crow Bend. Abe wanted Kate to go down thar with him, but she had partly agreed afore that to go long er me; so to git herself out of it and me in, she said she would go with the one who could take her the fastest.

"'That's me,' said Abe, straightenin' up kind of proudly, and givin' his pantaloons a hitch up at the waistband. 'I can let you count the panels along the turnpike a leetle the quickest of any person around these quarters,' and he looked sidewise at me to see how I took the assertion.

"'It's not allers the hen that does the most extensive advertizin' that makes the largest deposits,' said Tom Ruggles, laughin', as he sat thar packin' away his dishes.

"'No, Tom,' said Gus Parks, the millinery man, who didn't like Abe any too well, because

he sort o' smashed an engagement between him and the schoolmarm; 'and it's not allers your longest-tailed quadrupeds that git over the ground the fastest, nuther.'

"'Wal, never mind, boys,' ses I, jest easy, that way, 'the proof of the whiskey is in the headache arterwards. I reckon I kin kill as many grasshoppers between here and Grab Corners as any person that cracks a whip.'

"'What! with them thick-skinned critters of yourn?' said Abe, p'intin' his fingers at my hosses, and laughin' as though it was mi'ty funny. It made me feel pooty riley, but I kept my temper.

"'Supposin' they hev thick skins,' I ses, 'they're somethin' like the cheese that goggle-eyed Peter bought from the peddler, their peculiarity doesn't lie in the thickness of their hide so much as in the mysterious way they have of movin' themselves around.'

"'S'pose you try a race back to the Corner, then,' ses one of the boys.

"'Yes,' ses Kate Rykert, clappin' her hands

and jumpin' up. 'I'll ride back to the Corner with one of you, and let Tilley Evans go with the other, and I'll go to the ball with the one who gets to the village first.'

"'Agreed,' ses Abe, 'and you'll ride back with me?'

"'No, I'm heavier than Tilley,' ses Kate; 'let everythin' be even; toss up for partners back to the Corner.'

"This seemed fair, so we flipped, and I won Kate. She weighed ten pounds more than Tilley, but I didn't care for that, for I knowed if the worst come to the worst, she was none of your jumpin' out kind; she would stick to the buggy while there was one wheel and the seat left, and that's the sort of a gal to have along with a feller when he's tryin' hoss flesh.

"The whole picnic gathered around us when we were gettin' our teams ready and war speculatin' on the result. Money was gwine up on all sides. Parson Briarly had no change about him, but he bet his gold-bowed spectacles

against old Silverthorn's meerschaum pipe that I would git to the Corner fust.

"'Beat him, Jim,' ses Gus Parks, 'and I'll give Kate the best bonnet in the store.'

"'And I'll give her the highest-heeled pair of boots that I've got in my shop,' said Tom Ruggles, the boot and shoe dealer.

"'Then Kate is a bonnet and a pair of boots ahead, for sartain,' ses I, jumpin' into the buggy and squarin' round my horses for the road; and with that we started, lick-a-te-split! down the turnpike, Abe a leetle ahead, but not enough to make much difference with five miles of good turnpike ahead of us, without let or hindrance.

"Pooty soon Kate leaned over to me, and ses she, 'You must beat him, Jim, for between you and me, I would rather go to the ball with you than with Abe.'

"This made me feel mi'ty good, and ses I, 'You musn't get skeered then, for I reckon we'll hev to take some desperate chances to 'git thar fust.'

"'Let me alone for that,' ses she; 'when I can't ride as fast as a hoss can run, then I'll stay to hum, and let dad tote me around in the wheelbarrow.'

"Just then we came up with him. He tried to shake us off, and would spurt ahead, but I'd crawl up on him agin, and stick thar, lappin' him and goin' with him stretch for stretch, like a dog when he's a-freezin' to a pig's ear. Away went Kate's hat a-flutterin' over butter-cup swale, like a Bird of Paradise over the gardin' of Eden.

"'That's mi'ty bad, Kate,' ses I, lookin' over my shoulder at it sailin' off.

"'Let it go hatchin',' ses Kate, laughin'. 'It's only gettin' out of the way of the new bonnet.'

"I thought 'twas a good omen myself, but didn't say anythin', for jist then Abe shot a leetle ahead, and as he was gwine off, he hollered, 'You can't do it, Jim.'

"'I kin,' ses I, determinedly.

"'Your hosses are ginnin' out; they hain't

got the bottom into 'em,' he shouted, jest that way.

MRS O'LAUGHLAN.

"'It must hev dropped out last night, then, ses I, and with that I overhauled him agin. Past Brian O'Laughlan's door-yard we went

like a whirlwind through a flour mill, over a hen and three suckin' pigs. The old woman was standin' thar in the yard with her apron

JUST AS IT WAS.

full of chickens, shakin' her fist at us and swearin' like a drunken gypsy. Her long tongue was a-slushin' and dashin' against her one front tooth like a mop ag'inst a table leg.

"I could have laughed myself to tears, only I had to keep my eyes clear, for the road was so narrow in some places that when we were abreast there wasn't any ground to spare.

"We were now passin' the half-way spring, and the race was fully as undecided as when we broke away from the hootin' crowd on the picnic grounds.

"Down past old Deacon Shovelridge's ten-acre hop yard we went, rack-a-te-bang! hub end against hub end, and the outer wheels a-spokin' it within six inches of [illegible]ur-foot ditch.

"The ride to the Corners began to look like the ride to etarnity, and Tilley was as pale as a gray nun's ghost, and continewally making narvous reaches for the lines.

"But Kate was equal to the surroundin's. Thar she sot, with one arm around me and 'tother graspin' the seat rail, and above the clatter of hoofs and steel axles, I could hear her repeatin':—

"'Stick to him, Jim, and start my stitches, if he doesn't git his crop full of dust yet!'

"Old Shovelridge was in the field on a load of hay as we were passin'. He was inclined to piety, and if the world had no hosses in it, I reckon he'd have been as pious as a church organ.

"And when he saw us a-raspin' down the turnpike as though we were ridin' in a four-hoss chariot, and saw Kate Rykert's great swad of blonde har a-streamin' out behind, like the tail of a comet, he couldn't contain his feelin's nohow.

"He gin a rousin' whoop like a Chilchat Indian when he sights a fur hunter. Throwin' away the pitchfork—which accidentl'y harpooned the old lady in the back, who was rakin' behind—and jumpin' from the load, he took across the field to'ards the turnpike, swingin' his old straw hat and hollerin':—

"'Go it, Dudley; go it! keep the hoss up with the rat-tail mare, and I'll bet my farm you'll make Grab Corners fust!'

"This made me feel pooty good, for the mare was the one I had some fears about.

"But you ought to see how it affected Abe; he commenced to slash his hosses and swar like an ox teamster when his cart is stuck hub deep in the mud.

"Finally the off-horse broke, and there was a sort of irregular upheaval among 'em for a while, as though they were steppin' on broken cakes of ice; one would be gwine down while 'tother was a-comin' up.

"Abe tried to bring 'em down to their work agin, and in the meantime I kind of cork-screwed ahead and swung into the centre of the road in advance of him. Then I began to feel somethin' like a feller what holds the winnin' cards, and sees the other chaps a-pilin' up the coin on their inferior pasteboards. But I see some young half-breeds a-squattin' around on the road about a quarter of a mile ahead, and knowed at the rate we war travellin' we'd be on top of 'em before they'd see us if I didn't haul up.

"So I ses to Kate, 'See them plag'y brats ahead of us thar! what hed we better do about it?'

"'Run over the centipedes,' ses she. 'Abe ain't a gwine to slack up for 'em,' and she cuddled closer to me, so the jolt would'nt hist her out.

"I shouted two or three times, but they were too busy with their mud pies, I reckon, to take any notice, and Abe was makin' no signs of haulin' up. I did my best to sheer round 'em, and kept right on for the Corners.

"I heered 'em scream as we went a-whirlin' on, but reckon it was more through fright than injury.

"Abe had lost his grippin's. He couldn't overhaul me ag'in, nohow, and I gradually crawled away from him, if he did his pootiest.

"The whole village seemed to be out to the bridge to see what was comin.'

"They see the dust risin' when we were more'n a mile away, and they allowed the greatest run-away was a-comin' down the turnpike that had happened since Bull Run, and were out thar speculatin' as to whose family was in danger.

"But when they see it was a race, and recognized me, you ought to see the scatterin' amongst 'em. You'd think a hull menagery had broken loose and was comin' for 'em.

"Ole Pelvy, the shoemaker, was a-settin' on the railin' of the bridge; but jest as I crossed it, the crowd hoorayed, and jostled him off. He hung over the railin' by one leg, with his body swayin' below, and him a-hollerin' like a good feller, and signalin' for help, but the crowd were so taken up with the race, and were cheerin' and swingin' of their hats continewally, that they never knowed anythin' about his position.

"Pooty soon his leg slipped over, and then he went, end over end, more'n twenty-five feet, into the river, and was carried over the falls before anybody missed him. Arter that people weren't troubled so much with corns around Grab Corners, for though he's dead now, I'll say it of him, he was the wust shoemaker that ever shoved an awl into a hide.

"I druv up to the hotel, and had jest got

CURING PEOPLE'S CORNS.

through helpin' Kate out, when up come Abe, with his hosses hobblin' as if they had picked up a twenty-penny nail in every hoof.

"They looked somewhat as if they had bin swimmin' in a soap vat.

"Abe was very much of a man, though, arter all. His hosses, I reckon, had never bin passed before, but he didn't bluster nor git mad about it, neither, though it must have been pooty tryin' to him.

"'By the Witch of Endor's long eye-tooth,' he cried, as he jumped from the buggy, 'you did it Jim; and you did it fair. Only I kinder think you swung in ahead of me a leetle too quick back thar where that crazy old whipper-in hollered so.'

"'No, Abe,' ses I, 'I didn't take an inch o' turnpike till I was entitled to it.'

"'Wal,' ses he, as he came round to look at my animals, that were standin' thar seemingly as cool as a brace of toads in a celler, 'I'll be shot if them hosses of yourn ain't somethin' like the widder Tappan's boarders. The speed

they show in gettin' away with anythin' was most surprisin'.'

"So Kate Rykert got the bonnet and boots, and I gin her a new dress to go with them, and if we didn't shine out some the next week down to Crow Bend, then thar ain't no use talkin' about it that's all."

A TRIP ACROSS THE BAY.

I TOOK a trip across the water this afternoon. The bay was so rough the ferry-boat could scarcely make her trips. The passengers were nearly all sea-sick, and, elbow to elbow, leaned over the side of the vessel. One gentleman, while gazing into the sea, lost his hat overboard, but he was so taken up with internal affairs that he cared little for outward appearances, as one could readily observe.

I reached my destination, and was convinced that all the sorrows are not on the sea. I saw a poor old woman thrown into terrible disorder by a kick from the cow she was milking in her own yard. Judging by the quantity of milk lying around loose, she must have been nearly

through her task, and was probably in the very

PEERING INTO THE DEPTHS.

act of complimenting the cow for her generosity, when the spiteful animal gave the pail a hoist

completely over the woman's head, like a huge helmet, while the lacteal fluid ran down her

GOOD-BYE.

body. The pail seemed to stick, despite her efforts to remove it.

As I looked back, I could see her groping

toward the house, her visage still concealed in the blue bucket. She did look odd enough, as she felt her way up the steps, decorated with that novel head-dress.

There is a youth in this suburban town who

SKETCHING FROM NATURE

bids fair to be a second Landseer. As I passed his father's residence, I saw the young aspirant at work sketching from nature.

He had the foot of a little cur fast in the jaws of a steel-trap staked in the orchard. The artist sat at a short distance sketching the

poor beast, as it stood on three legs gazing at the heavens and crying piteously. He was eagerly striving to get the expression of pain upon the dog's face, and by the grin upon his own countenance I judged he was succeeding.

There was something in the pair that reminded me of Parrhasius and the Captive; and being in somewhat of a sketching mood myself at the time, I produced my book and pencil, and leaning over the fence, sketched the painter and his howling model.

On my way back to the city the bay seemed even rougher than in the morning. There was hardly a passenger on board the ferry-boat but showed symptoms of trouble. Although most of them would have been excellent subjects for the artist of a comic pictorial, my attention was specially directed towards an elderly lady, who sat with folded arms, the elbows resting upon her knees, and a most woe-begone expression upon her wrinkled visage. Some passengers who were sick were able partly to conceal their

emotions; *she* was not; every muscle of her face betrayed her. She was sick and couldn't help but show it.

SO SICK!

If any individual amongst that crowd of disquieted passengers knocked louder at the door

of human sympathy than did the old lady referred to, it was unmistakably that woman who was sick and had to show it at the vessel's rail.

AT THE RAIL.

THE POISONED PET.

IT was my good fortune the other day to attend a picnic in the country. A lady friend insisted on tacking her pet boy to me on that occasion. As she couldn't go herself, she wanted me to have an eye to "sonney," and see that he didn't come in contact with poison-oak. She assured me he was a good boy and would mind me as if I was his father! I didn't pine for the pet's company, but could not very well refuse her request. So he went with me.

I very soon found out he was one of those smart children who, by a strange freak of nature, are placed in possession of an impudence that prompts them to believe they know

more at the age of eight than your average adult.

My will and his wishes soon clashed.

Then the thought entered my head that his mother misrepresented "sonney's" obedient nature. "If this is the obedience that an offspring manifests to a father," I mentally murmured, "it were better to be destitute of the offspring." The boy sauced me. He even went so far as to call me names anything but flattering, while I was sitting in the presence of a young lady I most ardently adored. "Go on, sonney!" I said to myself savagely, "go on, precocious youth, there are no raging bears in this suburban park to tear the flesh from the bones of mouthy children who 'sauce' their betters, as did the animals in the days of prophets; but nature in other ways has made provision for such as you, and has sprinkled a few shrubs around here that can pile the flesh onto a person's bones to an alarming degree, if they get a fair chance."

After that I paid no attention to him. He

ran at will, browsed through the vines like a hungry deer, and burrowed into the very heart

HAVING A QUIET TIME.

of the poison-oak and ivy, with as little fear as a quail retiring to roost. He enjoyed himself immensely; so he informed me in the evening.

I am glad he did, for he is having a quiet time of it now. I saw him this morning, and his face was as full of expression as a Christmas pudding new rolled from the cloth. I think my lady friend will not be over-anxious to appoint me guardian over her dutiful son at another picnic. In the interests of art I have made a sketch of "sonney" as he appeared this morning, striving to recognize me by my voice, which he failed to do, however, being deaf as he was blind.

SEEKING FOR A WIFE.

AND it came to pass about the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three, being in the autumn, when the new wine was oozing from the press, and the corn was hardening in the crib, a bachelor, a farmer of great possessions, dwelling in the valley of Berryessa, bent above his resting plow, and thus communed with himself:—

"My stacks are builded, my wine is dripping from the press, the ripe ears are garnered in my cribs, my flocks and herds feed fat upon the hills; and yet, because of my loneliness, am I unhappy.

"I will arise at eve and repair to my neighbor's cottage. Peradventure the aged widow of the murdered gypsy can counsel me."

So when the evening hour was come, the

THE CRONE.

farmer arose and sought the aged widow's abode.

And as he drew nigh to the cottage, he lifted up his eyes and, behold! the crone sat upon her doorstep.

And when the dame looked upon the farmer she knew his heart was troubled; but she knew not the cause.

So, lifting up her voice, she cried, inquiringly: "What aileth my neighbor? Has ought befel thy goods? Has bruin descended from the mountains to worry thy flocks? Or, are thy stacks consumed? that thus you droop your eyelids to the path, and move as by a hearse."

And the farmer, drawing nigh, replied: "My flocks unharmed graze sleek upon the hills; my stacks stand unconsumed; yet is my spirit heavy, because my walks are lonely and my heart is sad, and I come as one seeking counsel."

Then answered the dame reprovingly: "Out upon thee, for a fusty, dreamy bachelor! Go take to thyself a wife; then will thy walks be no more lonely, neither will thy heart be sad."

But he, answering her sorrowfully, said:

"Mock me not, good madam, but look with pitying eyes upon me, and hearken to my voice.

"Behold, I am now well stricken in years, my body is stooping to the grave, my manners, like my hands, are rough; my blood, like my hair, is thin; and my teeth but shine in memories of the past.

"How, then, can I win maidens' hearts? Alas! on the contrary, they would giggling flee from before me; no hope for me remains; if I would wed, I needs must wed a squaw!" And his countenance fell.

Then was the crone exceedingly displeased, because he said, "I needs must wed a squaw," and she answered him derisively, saying:—

"Go to! Ye speak as with the beak of a parrot, and with the understanding of a babe! Are ye studied in books and know not the proverb, 'A golden snare will catch the wildest hare?'

"Do not your stacks dot the vale below like an Egyptian camp? Are not your tanks brim-

ming with wine and your cribs grinning with corn?

"Do not your cattle graze upon an hundred hills? and your industrious laborers follow in the furrow? And are ye still afeared? Oh ye of doubting mind!

"Go, get thee to thy chest and take to thyself suitable coin, and hasten to that great city by the sea—whose churches point to heaven, but whose people bow to gold.

"There sojourn for a season, and make no delay in adorning thyself with precious stones.

"Put diamonds upon thy bosom and rings upon thy fingers, and be zealous to stand in the hall-ways and in the market-places, and in the houses of exchange.

"Seek to be observed of the people, and take heed that ye look upon all men as being thy servants.

"And let thy wealth be noised abroad.

"Then shall rise up in the house of mourning the widow of a month, and dry her weeping eyes.

"Then shall the maid of many summers lay aside her pets, to readjust her charms, and disinter her smiles.

"Then shall the doting damsel, when her parent maketh fast the door, creep out some other way.

"And they all shall come trooping as with the voice of birds to court thy smiles and thy manners, and thy years shall be as the silk of the spider in thy way."

Then was he exceedingly glad because of the crone's advice, and he went away to his own home rejoicing.

And on the morrow he arose before it was yet day, and saddled his mule, and journeyed to the great city by the sea, and lodged at the house of a friend.

And he made haste to purchase diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and onyx-stones, and sapphires, and put massive rings upon his fingers, and seals upon his chain.

And even as the crone had directed, he scrupled not to stand in the hall-ways, and in

ATTENDING TO BUSINESS.

the market-places, and in the houses of exchange, and sought to be observed of the

PARTNER WANTED.

people, and lived as a man having great possessions.

And not many days after, a fair lady of that place, looking from her window, saw that the stranger shone like the mid-day sun, even so much that her heart was warmed.

So she called the keeper of the house aside, and questioned him concerning the stranger, saying:—

"Who is this stranger that lodgeth in thy house, who beameth with jewels like the noon-day sun? Make him known to me, for he is a choice and goodly man, and my heart warmeth for the stranger."

Then answered the good man of the house, "He is a sojourner from the valley of Berry-essa, and lo! he is a man of great possessions; and, moreover, take heed if he cometh in your way, that ye smile graciously upon him, for be it known unto you he is a bachelor, who cometh amongst us seeking a wife."

Then was the damsel exceedingly moved.

And when it came to pass that the stranger was introduced to her, she smiled graciously upon him, and she opened her mouth and

spake knowingly of barley, and of rye, and of corn in the ear, and of tares.

And she also spake of four-footed beasts, of calves, of pigs, and of goats, and cattle after their kind; and of fowls; of doves, and of ducks, and of geese, and poultry after their kind.

And lo! the farmer's heart was touched, for she was comely to look upon, and wise withal.

And he communed within himself, saying: "Surely this maid would indeed be a great catch, she would make her husband's home cheerful, and in divers ways pluck from the palm of life the festering thorns. Beshrew me, but I will lay strong siege to the damsel's heart."

So he made haste to pull wide open the mouth of his purse and loaded her with presents, for the damsel had found favor in his eyes, and he sought to win her.

And not many days after he espoused the maiden, and there was great feasting and

merry-making at that house, and the same was heard of the neighbors.

And on the following day the farmer took her to his own home, in the valley of Berry-essa, and they lived happily together for the space of many years.

THE ART GALLERY.

HEARING that a large collection of paintings were on exhibition at the Art Gallery, I visited the rooms this afternoon, and was agreeably surprised to discover that quite a number were by eminent artists.

It is pleasant to gaze upon an old picture that has come down through the dust of ages, so I made it a point to employ the hour at my disposal in sketching several subjects most admired by the visitors. I did not learn the author of the large picture from which the first of my sketches was taken, but was assured that it came from the hand of an old master.

I would have thought it a representation of "Cleopatra before Cæsar," if the female had

been running toward the man instead of away from him.

A gentleman present, who examined the painting closely, gave it as his opinion that the couple represented "Tarquin and Lucrece."

FROM A PAINTING BY AN OLD MASTER.

He informed me he had visited many art galleries of the Old World, and found several paintings which had been copied from this masterpiece by artists, who paid homage to such creative genius.

As he claimed to be something of a connois-

seur, his supposition was probably a correct one, though he was not able to thoroughly account for the singular-looking bonnet that shadowed the head of the prancing "Lucrece."

It is certainly anything but a Roman head-dress, and why it should be dangling from her royal top is something for critics to comment on and antiquarians to inquire into.

Another little sketch attracted great attention, especially from the ladies, whose love for the beautiful is only excelled by their love for the good. It was entitled "Love's Young Dream." I regret I am not able to give the artist's name. I could not get near enough to decipher the signature, owing to the crowd of ladies admiring the beautiful gem.

The members of the Graphic Club were sketching. Accepting an invitation from one, I stepped into their room to see them draw. Quite a number of artists were present. The famous marine painter was there, who loves to paint the vessel going before the wind, when in its might it takes "the ruffian billows by the

top." It was pleasant to watch his pencil pile up the "yeasty waves" at will.

It was also interesting to lean over the land-

"LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM."

scape painter's shoulder and see the branches sprout from his grand old oaks, against whose trunks it would seem the storms of centuries had spent their force.

It was no less pleasant or interesting to perceive the horns shoot from the animal painter's cows. As the creature grows under his active pencil, we may be inclined to think she will be of the Mooley species, and never shake a gory horn above a prostrate victim; but alas! a few hasty but well-directed strokes, and she stands forth more formidable than the armed rhinoceros or rampant unicorn. Then we hold our breath, as we see the pencil slide away to some other locality before a tail is attached to the body, and inwardly wonder whether the artist has forgotten to bestow upon her that graceful adjunct, or is intentionally giving us a new species of cattle. We heave a sigh of relief when the pencil returns, after a brief skirmish along the ribs, to bestow upon the cow that terminal appendage, at once a scourge for milk-maids and a swing for dogs.

RIDING IN THE STREET CARS.

A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
And faith he'll prent it.
—*Burns.*

THE greater portion of this day I have spent riding in the street cars. I find it is quite a pleasant way of passing a few leisure hours. Neither is it an extravagant way of entertaining one's self.

On figuring up, I find, by choosing the longest routes, it cost just seven and one-quarter cents per hour. This is certainly reasonable.

There is always something amusing to look at as you pass along. There stands the nervous old lady upon the street corner. She wishes to ride, and endeavors to signal the

driver and prepare for embarking at one and the same time. She proves the truth of the

THE SIGNAL STATION.

old saying that a person may get too many irons in the fire. In her eagerness to attract the attention of the driver or conductor, she is

not aware that in lifting her skirts she has elevated one or two thicknesses more than she intended, or than is at all necessary. Poor old lady! She does, indeed, present a picture that might well attract the artistic eye. We in more becoming order turn our eyes from the singular spectacle and study the advertisements ranged around for our special benefit. She emits a short, quick cry, half whoop and half squeal, and signals repeatedly, to do which the inevitable umbrella is brought into requisition, and flourished around her head as though she was warding off a detachment of aggressive wasps. She gives the conductor a look of surprise, if not anger, because he completes the curve before stopping to take her up. The old lady means business, and has never got it through her head that conductors have rights which she is bound to respect. She no doubt believes that on all occasions and at all times he ought to seize the strap and stop the car as suddenly as he would a clock by grasping the pendulum.

Then there are the fashions, which we can study without having to pay exorbitant prices for seats in the theatres. It is even better than to go to a fashionable church.

Besides the advantages which a ride in the street cars offers us in the way of studying the fashions, we often see strange sights, well calculated to awaken humor. There, for instance, we encounter the sleepy passenger, who, in charity let us hope, is drowsy through loss of rest, rather than loss of reason! Let us hope he is some physician who has been attending to his patients; or a minister of the gospel who has spent the night by the bedside of some sinking penitent; or a supervisor, who—while his constituents have been snugly dreaming away their troubles—has been legislating, and growing hoarse declaiming for the public good. Doctor or supervisor, as the case may be, it is evident he is sleepy, and cares not who knows it. Otherwise, he would pick up his hat, which has fallen off, before it has

twice been stepped on by passengers staggering through the car while it is in motion.

RATHER "SLOROPPY."

With a persistency truly amusing he tips in the direction of some old lady, who apparently hates men, especially when excessive drowsi-

ness makes them familiar. He, however, is oblivious of her likes or dislikes, even of her presence, it would seem.

He bobs towards her until his dishevelled fore-lock actually tickles her under the ear, which sensation causes her to start suddenly, and look around so quickly, that a person must think the movement gave her a crick in the neck, and her subsequent rubbing of the cords below the ear would seem to bear out the supposition as correct.

Then, as we ride along, we can see the bold policeman! standing by the corner of a building. He is earnestly looking down a narrow lane, taking notes perhaps; but more likely watching the progress of a fight, and wisely waiting until all the pistols are discharged before venturing to arrest any of the belligerent parties. He looks as though it would not take much longer reflection or many more shots to make him forego that duty *in toto*, and turn around to arrest the poor Chinese vegetable peddler, who, with his basket pole upon his

shoulder, is trotting along upon the sidewalk,

SNIFFING THE BATTLE FROM AFAR.

and thereby violating one of the city ordinances. While hustling the prisoner to the station

house he would escape performing more unpleasant and risky business.

He is in the right of it, too, when a person comes right down to reason the case. The policeman may have a family depending on him for support. Or it may be upon the very stroke of the hour when his duty for the day will cease, and he can saunter to his home, leaving his successor to rush in and stay the slaughter.

It may be argued that the policeman is paid to take prisoners, and consequently to take chances. This is true, but he is not paid to commit suicide. For a broad man like him to move down a narrow lane, up which the bullets are whistling, can hardly be considered anything short of it. Oh! he is a cunning fellow I tell you, and revolves the matter carefully in his mind before taking action.

He has been too long a resident of the city, and too long a member of the "star brigade," not to know that the city can better afford to lose two or three indifferent citizens than it can one able and efficient policeman.

We turn from the policeman to contemplate the blooming blonde, who comes bouncing in with her poodle dog in her arms.

After she is seated she amuses some of the passengers and displeases more, by the affectionate names she lavishes upon the little watery-eyed pet in her lap. Some of the passengers would doubtless like to be the dog, and others would like to be a distemper that they might legally kill the cur. She temporarily ends her caresses by repeatedly kissing its cold peaked nose, to the infinite disgust of the majority of the passengers, who, rather than witness a repetition of the silly act, look out of the windows and become suddenly interested in the construction of the buildings or fences along the route.

And then there is the impatient passenger, who is either limited in time or sense, probably in both.

He foolishly attempts to leave the car while it is in motion, in order to save a few moments. Immediately afterwards he wishes

he hadn't, and sits down with considerable feeling to think over his rashness. There was a time, no doubt, when he could jump on and

ALIGHTING GRACEFULLY.

off a car like a newsboy; but that time has evidently gone by.

When we consider the roughness of his seat and the unexpected manner in which he settled on it, we have to acknowledge that he sits with

considerable grace. However, as he has lost time instead of gaining it, by the action, he will perhaps try to catch a better hold of the old rascal's forelock the next time he is running past him.

THE VALUE OF A COLLAR.

DEAR me! what a terrible dodging life the poor city cur leads, to be sure, whose owner does not consider him of sufficient importance to warrant taking out a license. His excursions must necessarily be limited.

He never dares to bark in the daytime, and now I think of it, that may account for his howling all night. To bark between the hours of seven in the morning and six in the evening would be equivalent to running his head into the pound-keeper's lariat. He knows it, too, the rascal, and hardly indulges in a yelp, even if his tail is trod upon. I have always noticed that the eyes of the cur that wears no collar—

(which would entitle him to the freedom of the city)—protrude from the sockets much farther than the optics in the head of the licensed animal. I have noticed this fact and pondered over it, striving not a little to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion in regard to the matter. It may be that this strange protrusion is brought about by the continual strain while on the lookout for the pound-keeper or his sneaking aids.

Another peculiarity about the unlicensed cur,—his eyes are invariably the color of tobacco juice. "Why are they so?" you probably inquire. Be patient, and I will tell you. It is the result of the burning envy continually agitating his breast and adding a bloodier lustre to his orbs.

How must envy consume his very vitals when he beholds his younger brother, perhaps, trotting forth into the street, his neck encircled with the leather zone that insures him respect and immunity from assault; while he must cower behind the ash barrel, and wait for night

to temporarily shield him from insult and injury.

The old adage is hardly applicable to his case. He has no *day*, but he has his night,

NO COLLAR, NO CRUMBS.

however, and he would be a fool not to make the most of it.

How trifling a thing will draw the line between him and his licensed brother. One

white foot, perhaps, a spot too many on the head, or want of one above the tail, may have cursed him through the length and breadth of his existence. If he lives, it must be by his wits. Every man's hand or boot seems to be against him. The licensed dog can stretch lazily upon the sidewalk and oblige the pedestrians to go around him rather than take the chances of stepping over, or stirring him up with a kick.

It is dangerous business, this waking up a dog with your boot. You may take him in a time when not in the mood for permitting such familiar demonstrations.

Perhaps he may be hungry, and, since the dogs devoured poor painted Jezebel, their weakness for human flesh will occasionally make itself manifest. I, who have been thrice vaccinated by a canine tooth (and it took each time, too), speak knowingly on this subject.

Now, as I gaze out upon the street, I mark the slow approach of the pound-keeper's dingy cart. Ever and anon it comes to a sudden halt,

and skirmishers are deployed on each side to search the alley-ways and lanes along the route. Hark! what cry is this that comes quavering forth from that shaky prison? A bark? No, never a bark, but a quavering bleat from the pale lips of a poor old goat. Alas! poor goat.

It, too, was evidently straying about unlawfully, in some one's garden, perhaps, or stripping the posters off the fence before the paste was dry, or the bill-sticker a block away, and in consequence he is now occupying a position that, however exalted it may be in one sense, makes him feel very ill at ease all the same.

His fellow-prisoners are dogs of every breed under the sun.

There is no discrimination in that moving prison, no separate cells. The full blood setter pup fares no better than the worthless poodle that couldn't smell a quail a yard distant unless it was roasting. The big, sour, surly mastiff, with bloodshot eyes and pendent jowl, who long has been the acknowledged champion of a block,

and in his day lacerated many a paw, hasn't even a growl to offer, but crouches side by side with the poor maimed and mongrel cur that for years has been racking through life on three legs.

Still the dismal-looking cart jolts along, attracting the attention of the passing crowds. Still the villanous-looking aids, who flank the vehicle, trail their ready lariats, and dart exploring glances into every nook and corner. And, as I gaze, I marvel to see how quickly the outlaws get a knowledge of its approach, and stand not upon the order of their going, but precipitately leave for back yards and kitchens.

QUAINT EPITAPHS.

WHILE strolling through an old cemetery this afternoon I was surprised at the number of quaint epitaphs there to be found.

For a while I almost imagined myself rummaging among the old time-worn tombstones in some English or Welsh burying-ground. Many are written in verse, especially on the stones erected during a certain period, extending over about ten years, which proves that during these years the city had a tombstone poet among her citizens.

He was an odd genius, whoever he was, this graveyard rhymer.

One peculiarity seems to have been his coup-

ling with the epitaph a brief account of the manner in which the deceased party was taken off. The first inscription which attracted my notice as odd was chiseled upon a large marble slab which leaned over the spot where a party who had borne the ancient and honorable name of "Smith" rested from his labors. The obituary ran thus:—

"Smith ran to catch his fatted hog,
And carried the knife around;
He slipped and fell;
The hog is well,
But Smith is under ground."

This stanza should be introduced into public schools, and adopted as a morning chant, to impress upon the mind of the pupils the importance of a person's having his wits about him. Death brought about by such gross carelessness as Smith showed is—to say the least—first cousin to suicide, and doubtless there will come a time when Smith's case will be inquired into.

Under a large oak tree on the south side I

came upon a tombstone which bore no date, but had evidently been erected many years. The fence which once enclosed the grave had nearly disappeared, nothing remaining except a few rotten stakes protruding through the grass. What once had been a mound was now a hollow, which told the mute gazer decay had done its worst.

Through a rank growth of weeds and briers a few pale neglected flowers raised their delicate faces, like virtue struggling heavenward through the retarding throng inhabiting this naughty world.

The headstone was evidently erected before the poet's day, and he who erected it had composed the epitaph. It is more than likely he chiseled it also, as the letters were ill-shaped and irregular, and looked as though carved out with a pick.

Here is a *fac-simile* of the inscription:—

" Cynthy Ann is berried here.
Be easy with her,
Lord,

And, you won't lose nothin',
She was a plaguey good wife to me
But
She wouldn't be druv."

That "Cynthia Ann" had faults is evident from the tone. But I thought, as I turned from the spot, if her greatest fault lay in not allowing herself to be "druv," her prospects were better than the average.

What a contrast was the line inscribed upon a tombstone directly opposite:—

"He sleeps in Heaven."

Mere speculation only, and wild at that. The extravagant notion that a person sleeps in Paradise must have emanated from the brain of some sluggard, who thought that heaven without sleep would be a wearisome place. The "sleeper's" name was Gregg, and from a representation of a pair of scissors cut upon the slab I presumed he was a tailor. On making inquiry of the sexton, busily engaged closing a grave at the time, I found my supposition was right. Gregg was a tailor, but met death at

the heels of a horse. To use the sexton's own words, which were spoken in pure Greek—

THE SEXTON.

"Begorra he *was* a tailor, and it was meself

that planted him there. He was killed in the barn beyant, while sthrivin' to pull the makins' of a fish-line out of the tail of owld Gleason's stallion."

When a person learns what his occupation had been, and how he died, the assertion that he had gone to heaven strikes one as too ridiculous for anything.

Not less amusing or quaint was the verse inscribed upon the plain marble slab which marked the resting-place of Mr. and Mrs. Barradier. The stone was probably put up by some acquaintance of the deceased couple who knew that their marriage had been anything but a happy one; the verse upon it also informs the passer-by that they left no descendants to perform that pious duty. It said—

"Released from worldly care and strife,
Here side and side lie man and wife;
And with the couple buried here
Expired the name of Barradier."

THE CHAMPION MEAN MAN

YESTERDAY I came across a singular-looking individual dressed in a greasy, dingy suit. He was sitting on a log before his door engaged in repairing a shovel-handle.

"Say, stranger," I said, addressing him, "can you inform me where Deacon Shellbark lives?"

The farmer looked up, pushed his slouched hat back on his head, and, after surveying me some time in silence, drawled out:—

"Be you any relation of his'n?"

"No," I replied, a little surprised at his manner of answering; "I haven't a relative in the State."

"By thunder! I congratulate you upon your good fortune," he ejaculated, "particularly be-

cause there's no tie of consanguinity existin' atwixt you and old Deacon Shellbark. He's expectin' a son home, and I thought you mout be him.

"Wal," he continued, pointing with a huge jack-knife that he held in his hand, "you see that house to the left of them scrub oaks, don't you? that ar buildin' with the leetle coopalow on't? Wal, thar's whar old Deacon Shellbark lives; *the meanest man in this yer county*, and that's sayin' considerable, too! cause we've got some vicey-fisted customers round these yer parts, men who scrape the puddin' pot mighty clean before the dog gits a chance to canvass it, now I can tell ye. But I feel safe in stickin' in old Shellbark at the head, and I ain't agwine to haul him down nuther. I don't believe in talkin' much about one's neighbors, but I ginnerally tell strangers what sort of a man he is,' cause if they go to tradin' with him and aren't on thar guard, he'll skin 'em quicker than a whirlpool sucks in a dead fish."

"You know the deacon, then?" I remarked,

while the hope I had entertained of getting his name on my subscription list began to take to itself wings.

"Yes, I reckon I do know him," he replied, "pooty well, too; a great sight better than is profitable to him, and he knows it. Oh, you bet he knows it, and hates me as he does the dry murrain that gin the crows fifteen of his best cows last summer. I knowed him back in Scrabble Town.

"They wouldn't allow him to come within pistol shot of a church back thar, because they mor'n suspected he stole the wine and bread from the communion table one day. They were down on him flatter than a stone on a cricket allers arterwards. He's a deacon out here though, but that ain't nothin'. He can't fool me with his prayin'. I want no sech crooked old disciple as he is intercedin' for me, you know."

"I was hoping he would subscribe for this book," I remarked, "but I am afraid there is not much use of my going there if he is so very mean."

"Look'e here, stranger," he remarked earnestly, "you mout just as well stop thar whar you're standin'. Subscribe! He'll gig back from a subscription list jest as he would from a six-shooter."

"Ah, but this is a religious work, and perhaps he would lend that his support," I answered quickly.

"Religious work be shelved!" exclaimed the farmer. "That doesn't help ye any; you can't do anythin' with him, 'cause he hain't got no more soul than an empty gin bottle. You mout as well bait a rat trap with a cat's head, and expect the varmin to go a-nibblin' at it, as to expect him to put his name down to anything that's agwine to take coin from his pockets.

"You're a stranger in these yer parts I see, and tharfore haven't the slightest idea what a towerin' mean man he is; why he'd run a mile to git on the sunny side of a feller to cheat him out of his shadow! I knowed him back in old Indiany. He's from the same place that I

am, but you can kick me clear over them

SLEEPY DOBY.

foot-hills and back ag'in if I don't feel like takin' pizin every time I have to own up to it.

He used to be in cahoot with a tanner back thar named Doby; sleepy Doby, the boys called him, for he was the sleepiest feller you ever did see. Go asleep while workin' at anythin'. He would drop asleep sometimes while scrapin' a hide, and cut the consarned thing all into parin's; at other times he would fall back into the tan vat, then wake up and holler for the boys to come and fish him out.

"They say he dropped asleep once while ringin' a hog to prevent him from rootin' up the clover patch. The minister of the village had to pause in the middle of a sermon he was preachin', half a block away, until the squealin' subsided.

"But as I was gwine to tell ye, before the rheumatism got into his j'ints, and made him shun water as he would a tax-collector, old Shellbark used to be pooty fond of fishin'. One day Parson Bodfish was gwine off to have a day's sport, and took me along to carry the fish. I was only a boy then, and mighty tickled because I could go. Jest about the time we

got to the river we overtook old Shellbark a-pointin' thar too. When we got to the bank they both set in gettin' out thar hooks and lines, and then for the first time old Shellbark found out he had left his bait to hum. So he commenced to sputter and fret, takin' on terribly about it, until Parson Bodfish ses to him, 'That's all right; I reckon I've got enough bait in this box for both of us, and I'll give you half of mine, and let us start in and make the most of it.' So the parson—who had a heart the size of a sheep's head—took out his bait-box and gin him more than half. It's so; I seed 'em when he took 'em out. Pooty soon arter, while the parson was a-standin' on a log that horned out over the water, a-baitin' of his hooks, a big-mouthed fish-hawk gin a-chatterin' screech overhead, and startled him a leetle, and while lookin' up he let his bait-box fall into the river.

"The box was open, so the worms war scattered every which way, and away went box and bait a-flukin' down the rapids, and the parson's

cusses follerin' arter. He *did* swar, by hunky! I heer'd him. He had a mi'ty hot temper, and it was more than he could do sometimes to keep it down. A feller couldn't blame him much for swarin' jest then, 'cause 'twas a pooty tryin' time. He turned around sort of quick when he thought of me bein' thar. I seed him turnin', though, and let on to be talkin' to a fish that I was stringin' on, so he reckoned I hadn't noticed him. We hurried on down the river, and arter a while overtook old Shellbark, who was snakin, 'em out as fast as he could fix bait and throw in.

"'I lost all my worms back thar, while standin' on a log,' ses the parson, 'and will have to fall back on you for some.' The old snipe grumbled out somethin' about bein' out of all patience with people who war so fool careless. Arter a while he took out the rag he kept the worms in, and although he had quite a large knot of 'em, he gin the parson jest one, and dead at that! It's so! You may laugh, but I seed it. When he was a-pickin' it out

and handin' it to him, and when Parson Bodfish

OPENING HIS HEART.

was a-stickin' the hook into him, he lay thar and took it as e-a-s-y, and never squirmed or ob-

jected the least. You'd hev thought it was a link of vermicelli the parson had picked out of a soup plate.

"When Parson Bodfish took it from him, he held it between his finger and thumb a while, jest that way, and I swow I felt solid sure he was agwine to slap it back into old Shellbark's face.

"He didn't, though. But he did look as if he'd like to, mi'ty well. He stood thar and stared him in the face as if actewally in doubt about his being the person he divided with in the mornin'. Arter a while he baited his hook and started in right thar. He had amazin' good luck, too, with one bait. He hauled out four floppin' great chubs, one right arter the other, and durin' the same time old Shellbark didn't get a bite from anythin' but mosquiters. He seemed jest tearin' mad over it, too, I can tell you.

"He stood thar a-floppin' and a-scratchin' and a-slingin' of his line out the full length, tryin' on all sides continewally, but to no purpose.

"At last, thinkin' he had a fish when he didn't, he switched up his line so spiteful it caught in a tree-top more than fifteen feet above his head; and while he was a-gawpin' up thar, jerkin' the line, and stampin' round, he sot his foot flat onto his string of fish that war lyin' thar on the bank and squashed the in'ards out of nigh every one of 'em. Between thar slipperiness and his confusion, hurryin' to get off 'em before they were sp'iled, he fell and slid down the bank, head fust, a-clawin' and a-kickin' jest like a skeer'd alligator. Only he chanced to strike ag'inst an old root that was stickin' up at the margin of the river, he'd have gone plum to the bottom for sartain.

"Unfortunately the last fish Parson Bodfish caught had swallered the bait, so he ses to me kind of low, 'Dolphus, let's see if we can't skeer up a lizard, or somethin' that'll do for bait when a man's in a pinch.'

"So we set in to huntin' and s'archin' under old logs and stones, and dead wild grass, but couldn't get hold of anythin'. The parson fell

three times on all fours in the dirt, and gin his wrist a mi'ty bad sprain while pursuin' a queer, long-legg'd horned critter somethin' like a cricket, only pizenous, I guess. I could have caught it once, as it went dronin' past, but didn't feel like touchin' it. Finally it got stuck into a clump of ferns, and he gin it up. So arter a while he ses, 'I'll have to go back and try that old Shellbark ag'in, though I'd ruther take a dose o' ipecac than do it.'

"So we come back to whar he was fishin'. He looked mi'ty solemn, and was muddy as an old stone boat. Ses the parson to him, 'I'll have to call on you ag'in for another *dead* worm; the one you gin me is all gobbled up.'

"'Seems to me you're mi'ty extravagint with the bait,' he ses gruffly, and switchin' his line around and slingin' it out far as the pole would let it go, but not makin' the least motion to comply with the parson's request.

"'Waal, I don't know how that is,' ses Parson Bodfish, kind of easy like, and tryin' to keep down his anger, that I seed was rizin' jest like

bilin' sugar, 'I nabbed four rousin' good fish with that one bait. I reckon that's doin' pooty well; fact I know it is. They seem to bite fust rate at dead worms jest now.'

"'Waal, I don't know anythin' about that,' ses the old narrow gauge, 's'posin' you cut up some of your fish and see if you can't catch somethin' with that sort of bait; fish bite pooty well at that sort of an offerin' jest before rain they say.'

"'Then you ain't a gwine to give me any worms?' ses the parson, in a husky voice, and shakin' like a rag in the wind, he was so chock full of passion.

"'Waal, this is a sort of curious world, Mr. Bodfish,' ses old Shellbark, slow and niggardly like, jest that way, 'and without a feller looks out for himself he ain't considered nothin.' 'Sides, you know,' he contin'ed, 'fish-bait is a good deal like an oyster or a bean—somethin' that's mi'ty hard to divide with a feller,' and he commenced to troll along down stream.

"Apple sass and spinage! I never did see a

man so riled as that Parson Bodfish was sence I could distinguish the moon from a lightnin' bug. He changed to all the colors of the rainbow by turns in less time than I'm tellin' ye. You never seed sech a struggle between sin and piety as raged inside that parson for about five minutes.

"Fust piety seemed to be gittin' on top, then sin would choke her down and hold her thar. At last he turned around and run full chisel ahind the turned up roots of a big windfall as though a gallon and a half of black hornets war arter him. I reckoned he was gwine arter stuns to gin the old feller a good peltin,' and that kind of work bein' right into my hand, I ran thar too, cal'latin' to help him do it. But I was mistaken'd.

"He wasn't gwine arter stuns, for I seed so soon as he thought he was out of sight he flopped down on his knees right thar in the mud, a-holdin' his hands jined together above his head jest that way. I allowed he was a gwine to pray then for sartin, but he didn't pray; no siree, not much pra'ar jest then! he

sw'ar'd though. He did! I heered him, jest as plain as could be. Ses he:—

SWEARING TO GET EVEN.

"'I sw'ar I'll git even yet with that old Shell-bark, if I have to yank him out of his grave like a body-snatcher, to accomplish it!'

"I felt like runnin' thar and sayin', 'Don't rise yet, let me kneel and sw'ar too,' the same as that tricky feller does in the play whar he's a-foolin' the jealous nigger so bad; but I knowed it wouldn't do, 'cause he didn't want me to see him kneel thar in the mud. So when he came back he found me peltin' a frog as if nothin' had happened.

"'Come, Dolphus,' ses he, 'its gettin' pooty late; I guess we mout as well be a-movin' back home.' So we turned back toward the village, though 'twa'n't more than noon, and left old Shellbark fishin' thar. He did git even with him though.

"One Sunday soon arter Parson Bodfish was"—(here the farmer was interrupted by a wild-looking female who stuck her frowzy head out of an open window, like a turtle out of its shell, and shouted, in anything but a sweet voice:—

"'Dolphus! you natural born talkin' machine you! what are ye a-settin' a-pratin' and a-pratin' about out thar? that old hog is in the gardin

ag'in, a-h'istin' the parsnips, and crunchin' 'em like an old b'ar.'

"Consarn her spotted hide!" he vociferated, jumping up and grabbing a huge cudgel that lay near by. "Jest you stop yer, stranger, for about ten seconds, until I make that old sw[illegible] think thar's a trip-hammer got a foul of it, then I'll tell ye how the parson got even."

"I couldn't stop to hear the story any way," I replied, "for I must be travelling. However, I'll take your advice and give the deacon a wide berth."

As I descended the hill, the swine's wail was ringing in my ears, and I judged the trip-hammer was at work.

THE COBBLER'S END.

A LARGE crowd of people was standing in and around a small shoemaker's shop on Third Street. Elbowing my way to the inner circle, I found the excitement was over a man who had committed suicide. He was lying upon the floor, his hands still grasping a shot-gun, with which he had blown off the top of his head.

I learned it was the shoemaker, and that he had committed the rash act because the lady on whom his affections were set had seen fit to choose another for her partner. Worst of all, it was a tailor who, to use a common expression and one to the point, had cut him out. They were both charmed with the comeliness of the

young woman, and whenever an opportunity offered, were in the habit of throwing sheep's eyes in the direction of her apartment. The lady seemed to grow more interested in the situation, and even went so far as to smile archly upon him.

The tailor, who had never received such a compliment from so pretty a woman before, was quite carried away with joy. He felt that his love was returned, and from that moment the world presented a different aspect. It was not even a new picture in an old frame, or *vice versâ*, but was new throughout.

Even the old breeches on his lap seemed to suddenly undergo a strange metamorphosis. The stout, rough material, over which he had lately been bending with crippled fingers and sprung needle, in the twinkling of an eye seemed transformed into a golden fleece, through which the waxed thread flew like chain-lightning through a cotton umbrella. To have an interview was now his only study, and where there's a will there's a way.

One day a small boy was pressed into service and intrusted with a letter to the woman in whom his whole heart seemed wrapped. She received it safely, and duly by return of post broke the delightful intelligence to the tailor that his love was returned, and ended the epistle by requesting him to call.

Hardly had "seeling night scarfed up the tender eye of pitiful day," when the tailor, with palpitating heart, ascended the rickety stairs that led to the apartment. How he was received there is no knowing, but it is apparent to all he soon ingratiated himself with the handsome damsel, as the sequel shows.

The knight of the thimble and needle had saved considerable money and was comely to look upon, while she was both free and willing to wed, so the courtship was a short one.

As it happened, the tailor had received an offer from a business firm in the country that day, and as delays were considered dangerous, they decided to be married at once and start for their new home. It chanced that neither

the lover nor his fair inamorata were troubled with enough luggage to require the services of an express wagon, and it wasn't long before

A MOVING SCENE.

their traps were stuffed into sacks and bundles ready for removal.

Talk about striking while the iron is hot: they went ahead of the time-honored injunction, and hammered the iron while it was yet in the fur-

nace. The bat had hardly found his evening meal before they were united and received the congratulations of the officiating clergyman,

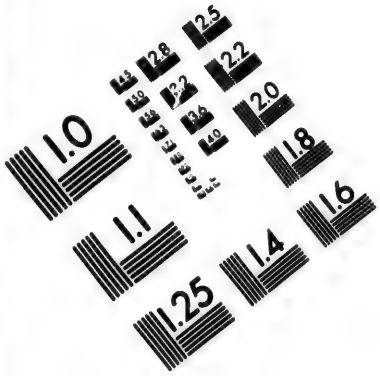
SHUFFLING OFF THE MORTAL COIL.

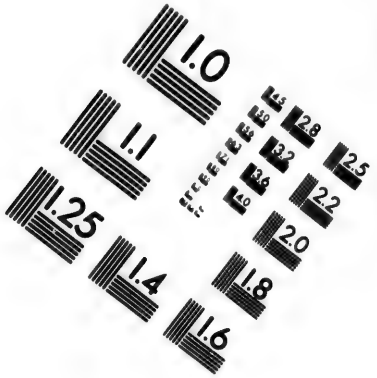
and, before Hesperus led her starry host down to the western main, the happy pair might have been seen bending under their respective burdens, and moving rapidly down the thoroughfare to catch the first train for the country.

Crispin soon discovered his handsome bird had flown. This was too much for the poor cobbler. He couldn't bear up under the weight, and, having procured a shot-gun, soon ceased to exist.

These facts I gleaned from a grocer who lived near by, and who was acquainted with all the parties. My mind was so disturbed by the distressing event, I found it impossible to sleep for hours after I reached my room. I started in to recite a book of Paradise Lost, but it was no go. I had Michael assaulting Satan with a shoemaker's awl, instead of with his sword of celestial temper. I then endeavored to run over an act in Shakespeare, but met with no better success. I had Othello blowing his head off with a shot-gun, instead of stabbing himself with a knife. Still, the terrible combination of circumstances culminating in the death of the poor cobbler crowded upon me in a saddening train, and much-needed rest came not to my relief until the following lines were composed and set to music:—

"Oh, the sunshine of his life
Had become a tailor's wife,
Which was more than selfish heart could bear;
So he got his gun in haste,
In his mouth the muzzle placed,
Turned his eyes aloft as if in prayer;
On the trigger set his toes—
As the illustration shows—
Then up to the ceiling went his hair!"





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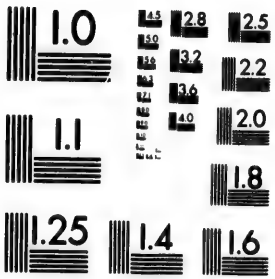
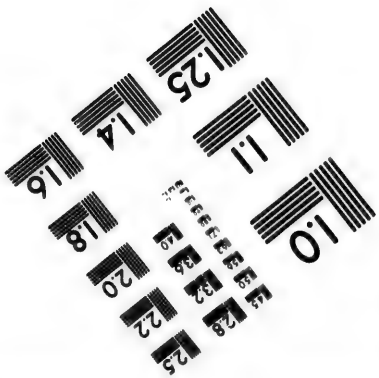




DINING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

TAKING dinner to-day in a restaurant, I was in danger of being carried off by cockroaches. If I was inclined to draw comparisons, I would say that in size the cockroaches I encountered in this place would compare favorably with cupboard door buttons. I had seen these troublesome insects on former occasions when I thought they were numerous —when they were as thick around the bread-plate as bees around their hive in June. But I had never been present when they turned out in sufficient numbers to take and hold possession of everything upon the table, even to the mustard-pot. To-day I witnessed such a spectacle. I counted until I tired; their skelping to

and fro made the task painfully difficult, and the effort was abandoned. They had evidently been lying in ambush in the cruet stand from the moment I sat down and gave my order, for

BUMMERS ON THE RAID.

the ring of the plate as it struck the board seemed to be the signal for a general advance. They appeared in military ranks, moving towards the dish in a semicircle, like a line of

Fenian skirmishers advancing heroically upon a turnip patch. There were no frost-nipped fellows, with drooping horns and dragging limbs, among those legions either. All were active, square-shouldered customers, real thoroughbreds, wide across the hips, and boasting a depth of chest capable of enduring any amount of running; while their long, formidable-looking feelers stood out at right angles from their heads, like the horns on a Mexican steer.

"During your natural life," I commenced, addressing a waiter who stood near by, evidently enjoying my surprise, "whether while officiating as head steward on board of a floating palace on the Mississippi, or serving as second cook on a grain scow on the San Joaquin, did you ever run across a place where the cockroaches were one-ninetieth part as numerous as they are in this restaurant?"

"Numerous?" he answered; "you should be here a warm, sunshiny day, if you want to see cockroaches, for then all the invalids are out—those fellows who have had their move-

ments across the table accelerated by a snapping finger, or such as have only tasted the poison scattered around for their benefit, or those who have taken an overdose and throwed it up again. These lie in cracks and cupboards, with stiffened joints and weak stomachs, when the weather is cold and cloudy; but when a warm day comes, they are all abroad and busy."

"Well, I will bear that in mind," I said, rising from the table, "and when the next total eclipse of the sun occurs, which, as I am informed, will take place in about four hundred and thirty-seven years, I may come into this restaurant for another meal, and not until then," and with that I left.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE editor of a city paper having occasion to take a trip into the country, prevailed upon me to assume the responsibility of answering letters from correspondents. The task is an onerous one—the more so as the editor, with that cunning ever noticeable in a person who takes the cream of a job, left me to reply only to the knottiest epistles. But I will some time get even with him, however. I will assume the editorial "we," and should I waken the wrath of any person, *he* will be the sufferer. Here is a copy of my answer to "Katie:"—

"The minister was perfectly right in refusing to marry the couple, if, as you say, the bride

insisted upon holding her poodle in her arms during the ceremony. The more so as the clergyman was near-sighted. He might possibly mistake the puppy for the bridegroom."

Another person accuses a correspondent of a mis-statement. He says it was the editor of the *Farmer*, and not the editor of the *Examiner*, who planted the package of No. 16 homœopathic pills sent him from the country by a wag, as the seeds of a Sandwich Island cabbage.

The old editor for weeks regularly watered the plot where he sowed them; but as nothing appeared, wrote to the country gentleman, informing him that his seeds hadn't sprouted, and he thought it likely they might have been taken from a dead head.

"Amy" is all in a fluster about spirits. I will talk to her after this manner:—

"We have always considered spiritualism the bluest carbuncle that ever festered upon the neck of society. We care not if the spirits were rapping around our table like a forty-stamp mill, we would eat our regular allowance

with all the coolness that a Celestial manifests when absorbing his birds'-nest soup. If your bed dances a *pas-seul* after you get into it at night, there must be more than spirits around; and you would do well to throw a boot-jack or flat-iron under it before retiring. Such a proceeding might give you the satisfaction of hearing the spirits yell blue murder.

"There is not much danger of your going crazy, because, in plain terms, we consider you to be luny already. The poor fellow in the lunatic asylum who imagines Queen Victoria has made a private residence of his nose, and who has nearly blown both eyes out striving to eject her, is hardly more so."

I trust the editor will lose some hair over that answer.

COURT-ROOM SCENES.

I AM as full of law this evening as a sea-shell of sound, having been wedged in the District Court room from 10 o'clock A. M. to 9 P. M., listening to testimony in the re-trial of the case of the People vs. a fiery lady, if we may use the expression, who brought down her game the first shot.

Though the room was crowded almost to suffocation, I fancy there is not that deep interest that was manifested during the former trial. On that occasion there were so many letters introduced in evidence, such a mass of private correspondence dragged from musty trunks, and laid open to the public, that thousands flocked daily to the court room, in hopes of

hearing something rich, if not instructive. I shall never forget the excitement during the reading of letter No. 947. It was from the defendant.

The counsel for the defence argued a good

A DROWSY JURY.

round two hours and a half by the court-room clock, against the letter being admitted in evidence. He maintained it was irrelevant, as it had never been opened, the receiver forgetting

to read it, or neglecting to do so, for some reason of his own.

The counsel for the people followed with even a longer appeal to the judge to admit the letter, strengthening his argument by lengthy quotations from Blackstone, Kent, Wharton, and other authorities, endeavoring to prove it should be put in evidence, as its contents might assist materially in furthering the ends of justice.

The judge began to show unmistakable signs of impatience. He remarked that already a package of letters had been read that would go far towards shingling the Mechanics' Pavilion, and had no more bearing upon the point at issue than "Darwin's Descent of Man" had upon the culture of white beans. He finally gave way before the preponderance of the prosecuting attorney's argument, and directed an officer to wake the jury, as a letter was to be read that all should hear. After considerable shaking and poking, this difficult duty was performed. Even the deaf juror was aroused, though the good-natured judge had permitted

him to sleep during the introduction of several preceding epistles.

After order was restored, and an inventive juror had improvised an ear trumpet with a piece of legal cap for his unfortunate companion, the *billet doux* was opened. As the seal was broken, judge and jury rose to their feet with one accord, and leaned as far forward as their desks would allow, the more readily to catch every word of the important document. The silence in the room was death-like. It was supposed that on the contents of this letter hung either a scaffold or an acquittal. The weak ticking of the dusty clock upon the wall was the only sound that disturbed the awful stillness. As the calm settled, the muffled beat of the time-piece increased in force and volume until it seemed to attain the tones of a fire bell. Presently the attorney in a high and tremulous voice began to read. The contents ran thus:—

My Dear, Delightful Darling:—How are my stocks selling now?

Your Loving, Adoring L——."

The effect was thrilling. The lawyer dropped the letter upon the table before him, ran his white fingers through his hair, and looked around with the air of a tired traveler when he ascertains he has walked five miles upon the wrong road. The gentlemen of the jury, with looks more of anger than of sorrow, dropped into their seats as suddenly as though an invisible hand had caught them from behind and jerked them to their benches.

The Judge, with an ill-concealed look of disgust, settled back into his chair, and the deep crease in his vest, immediately over where his dinner should have been hours before, grew more painfully perceptible.

I elbowed my way from the suffocating room before further correspondence was selected from the package for perusal.

A COUNTRY TOUR.

YESTERDAY I took a trip to a quiet country resort. On entering the town I was surprised at the scarcity of men in the place. There were plenty of women—fashionably dressed and otherwise—to be seen in the houses or gardens, but I rarely encountered one of the male sex in my travels through the streets. This, I at first supposed, was owing to the number of gentlemen residing there who carry on business in the city by the sea, and are consequently in the latter place during the day. I was informed, however, by the proprietor of the hotel at which I stopped, that such was not the case. He assured me it was mainly owing to the fact that the County Court

commenced that morning, and most of the male inhabitants, as was their custom on such occasions, had taken to the surrounding woods and mountains to escape jury duty.

The place is beautifully situated between high green hills, and said to possess the healthiest climate of any town in the State. During the summer months people flock there from all parts of the country. Healthy people pay high prices at the hotels for the privilege of living there, and sickly people do likewise, for the privilege of dying there.

The peculiarities of the town, and the distinctive manners and customs of the inhabitants, have been ably described by a poet whose effusions have not yet been translated into the foreign languages. Following is a part of the poem which bears directly on the town in question :—

"Here rest we now by sulphur well,
Where invalids and nurses dwell ;
Where yelping dogs run through the street
Like wolves across a prairie wide,

And cattle wild as bison meet
You face to face, on every side;
With tails in air, and frothy nose,
And leveled horns; they round you close.

"Where people sit around the door,
In lazy groups of three or four,
And still their chronic thirst abate
With copious draughts of 'sulphur straight.'"

There was quite an excitement in the town before I left. A fire broke out in an ash barrel situated in the rear yard of the house at which I was stopping, and for a time threatened to destroy the ashes. There is no estimating the amount of damage the citizens might have suffered if the fire had spread to a wash-tub that stood close by, and which at the time contained a portion of the town's washing. Business was generally suspended, and stock in the insurance companies went down immediately. The citizens breathed more freely, however, when the efficient and energetic Fire Department turned out promptly as one man, and hastened to the city water-works, situated on a slight eminence in the centre of the town, and, turning on the

water, succeeded in extinguishing the flames. The only damage done was the partial burning

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

of the barrel and the scorching of the wash-tub and five dog-houses. The dogs were lying under the kitchen stove at the time, and escaped injury.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHRISTMAS EVE! I sit idly by my window, listening to the rapid patter of the rain upon the shingles and the wild whistle of the wind as it plays around the gables, or draws weird music from the telegraph wires stretched between the house tops, and upon which dangles the ghost of many a school-boy's kite. Christmas Eve! and I am not yet invited out to dinner! what can this mean? Am I left to wither for want of attention, like some poor shrub plucked from a garden and planted in a graveyard? Well, let it be so. Alone though I am, I nevertheless enjoy myself hugely, and it requires considerable to enliven me now. There was a time

when I could be moved to mirth by very little. The desperate efforts of a one-legged grasshopper describing circles while endeavoring to leap straight ahead, would amuse me for hours together. But it is not so now; I turn from such scenes to bury my eyes in the pages of profound works, and it is meet and proper I should.

For the last half hour I have been watching an old washerwoman stealing, as I think, a neighbor's wood. It is barely possible that she is taking this method of paying herself for services rendered at the tub. Be this as it may, the wood is going. There is no mistake about that.

It is interesting to me, as it furnishes food for comment, and keeps the mind from lagging too long around the saddening fact that Time is writing lines upon my brow "with his antique pen." Besides it is holiday season, and though I am not able to be charitable to a great degree, I can at least afford to be indifferent in this case.

The washerwoman is doubtless a hard-working and deserving old body, who perhaps has sunk her whole week's earnings in a Christmas turkey, that her children's hearts may be made glad and their stomachs full; and it would be a great pity if it should be spoiled i' the cooking for the want of fuel.

I waive the crime, and speak of the facts from a disinterested stand-point. I have been such a diligent scholar in the severe school of experience, that I have learned to look upon my own misfortunes lightly, and certainly can behold—with an unmoistened eye—my neighbor's choicest sticks noiselessly slipping into an adjoining yard. Besides, my neighbor can afford to lose a few. To make my position good, I entrench myself behind the following fact: To be in the fashion, he pays the price of a good-sized farm for seats at the opera, where the language is as foreign to his understanding as South Sea Island gibberish. While he indifferently beholds such a wasteful running at the bung, why should I assume the busybody's

rôle and clap my finger on the dripping spigot?

Besides, I saw his wife last evening with fully four yards of expensive satin trailing in the dust. It was my misfortune to be walking directly behind her. As the crowd was pressing me onward, I was obliged to dance a sailor's hornpipe around the hall, in order to keep from treading upon her skirts. It needed not the grins of lookers-on to assure me that I was cutting a ridiculous figure.

I am now enjoying my revenge! Indirectly though it comes, it is none the less sweet or acceptable. On the contrary, it is rather more gratifying, as it calls for no action on my part, but simply to keep my mouth hermetically sealed. The poet truly sings:—

"Time at last sets all things even."

It has been in this case much quicker than I expected. As the skinny white arm stretches up out of the gloom of the washerwoman's yard, and another billet shoots from the pile

and disappears like a star from the firmament of heaven, I feel that a load is lifted from my heart, and I am reaping revenge.

Stay! what is this? a note, that all the evening escaped my notice. Lo! an aroma issues from it, sweet as Cytherea's breath! It is an invitation, as I live, to help dissect a Christmas turkey! Sound the timbrel, beat the tom-tom. I am not forgotten yet!

HEELS UP AND HEAD DOWN.

A STOUT old gentleman was enjoying the luxury of a salt-water bath in the bay, a short distance from where I was fishing. As he was a poor swimmer—notwithstanding he had a good supply of blubber—he attached a couple of inflated air-bags to his shoulders, by means of a string under his arm-pits. During his splashing about, and his repeated endeavors to strike out like Cassius bearing Cæsar from the troubled waters of the Tiber, the floats changed their position from his shoulders to his hips. This change he was not prepared for, and the result was distressing in the extreme. He immediately commenced sinking—as sailors say—by the head. In vain would he make long and desperate reaches toward the bottom; striv-

ing to anchor his feet in the soft sand. Just as his toes would touch the bed below, the buoyancy of the supports and under-current combined would prevail against him.

Up would come his pedal extremities to the surface, and consequently down he would go, head first, like a pearl diver, grasping at the pebbles beneath. After making a commotion in the water like the screw of a tug boat, which brought small crabs and craw-fish to the top with dismembered limbs, he would manage to get his head above water long enough to get a mouthful of fresh air, but retire immediately below to digest it. Some Italian fishermen, running in from the offing with their day's catch, sighted the old gentleman beating off the Point. They mistook him for a "devil fish," or some other odd-looking inhabitant of the briny deep, disporting itself in the sheltered waters of the bay. Getting out their hooks and harpoons ready for action, and changing course, they bore down with all possible speed in the direction of the singular monster.

The wind was blowing quite fresh, and it wasn't long until the Italians came nigh enough to ascertain the real state of affairs, and rescue the unfortunate swimmer from his perilous situation. The fishermen rolled the old gentleman over a keg they had in the boat for half an hour, before his stomach could be emptied of its washy load and breathing rendered easy. When sufficiently relieved to admit of speech, the bather gave his rescuers to understand that in future the tide might ebb and flow, be warm as milk new drawn from the cow, and tranquil as a frozen pond, but a common bath-tub would be rivers, lakes—yea, oceans—to him during the remainder of his natural life.

THE BITTER END.

WHILE in one of the interior counties today I stood beside the graves of six members of one household. The father and his five sons all fell in one sanguinary family feud.

It seems an ill feeling had long existed between two families named respectively Frost and Coates. Though they frequently indulged in small skirmishes—from which black eyes, bloody noses, or slit ears were the principal trophies borne away—they had never met when their full forces were under arms. And for the happy hour that would bring about such a meeting, each party looked forward with interest, if not impatience.

A day arrived at last, full of promise. It was an election day. Each party expected the other out in strength, with furbished arms, and prepared themselves accordingly. They took the street, resolved, that—

> "Ere the bat had flown
> His cloistered flight: ere to black Hecate's summons
> The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
> Had rung night's yawning peal, there would be done
> A deed of dreadful note."

Two planets keep not their motion in one sphere, nor could two quarrelsome families move long in a small village, or freely patronize the same groggeries without a collision. Towards evening they met, some mounted and more on foot, and from low jests amongst themselves respecting each other's lack of prowess upon former occasions, the controversy soon reached the point of positive contradictions. As the "lie direct" is equivalent to a well-developed kick to your average fighting man, hostilities soon commenced.

The Coates family opened the engagement

with a brisk fusilade, and at the first fire the gray-bearded patriarch of the Frost faction went down with all his imperfections on his head.

The firing now became general. "From rank to rank, the volleyed thunder flew."

Neutral parties fled from the street, and for a time transacted business with "closed doors." The report of the firearms frightened the horse of a disinterested gentleman, who was riding through the village, and despite his efforts to control the animal, it dashed directly between the belligerent parties. The fighting men, however, did not slacken fire on his account, but blazed away without seeming to notice or care whether the agitated stranger went down in the general *melee* or not. Fortunately, the gentleman escaped injury, but it was certainly more by chance than good guidance. It is said so rapid was the fire that a steady blaze seemed issuing from the muzzle of their weapons. When the smoke of battle raised, five of the Coates family were lying dead.

On the other side, Frost and one of his sons

were killed, and a son-in-law mortally wounded. People say the funeral was a saddening spectacle. Amongst the mourners were mothers, daughters, sisters and wives.

But the end was not yet.

Before the grass had taken root upon the graves, the ground was again broken, and another victim of the malignant feud was hidden from the sight of friends and foes.

The fires of hate still smouldered, and within a year another of the Coates family was put *hors du combat*, while going one night from the village to his ranch.

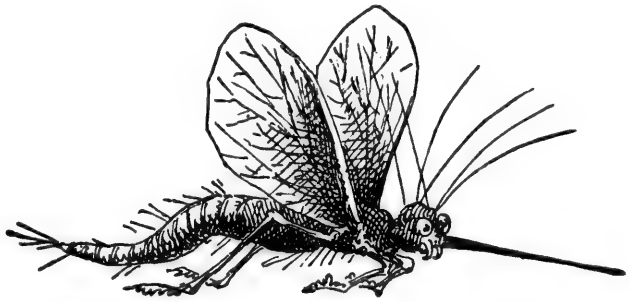
He was seen leaving for home on horseback at nine o'clock, but about ten his horse ran masterless into the farm-yard. The man was found lying by the roadside dead, a bullet having passed through his head. Suspicion reverted to the Frost family, but no proof could be brought to establish their guilt. The public finger still points toward them, however, and doubtless will continue so to do for many a day, or until the mystery is cleared up.

A TRIP TO THE INTERIOR.

A FLYING trip into the interior has not favorably impressed me. There were too many mosquitoes—too many graybacks. It is too far from civilization, and too nigh the sun. I stopped over night in a small city, and the first thing that attracted my attention on entering the place was the pale and sickly look of the inhabitants. This I attributed to the fever and ague, the hot weather, and impure river water which they drink. I was credibly informed by several parties that their pallor was owing to the quantity of blood that is nightly extracted from their veins by the mosquitoes. From the number of these pests infesting the place, it has taken the name of "The Mosquito City."

Those people who cannot indulge in such a luxury as mosquito bars, have to sleep during the day. They sit up nights and wage war against their ferocious enemies with tobacco smoke, burning leather, wet towels, or any other weapon to which they can conveniently resort.

To be stung by a black hornet or a scorpion



A MOSQUITO ON THE SCENT.

is bad; to be bitten by a tarantula or rattlesnake is worse; but to be punctured to the bone by the bugle of one of these mosquitoes is terrible. They are enormous insects. When flying through the air they are as discernible as thistle-down, or even humming birds. The sharp tube through which they sap their victim's blood is fully three-quarters of an inch

long, and resembles a cambric needle; this they steadily and unhesitatingly press into the flesh until they either strike a bone, or their forehead prevents them from doing deeper injury.

Towards evening they rise with pining maws from the low, damp land around the city—

> "Innumerable as the blades of green,
> That carpet the vale of the San Joaquin;"

and as they close in upon the devoted inhabitants, their blended cries swell in pitch and compass until the sound resembles the impassioned tone of a fish-peddler's horn. I stopped at a hotel in the lower part of the city, and before retiring for the night looked carefully about the room. As few mosquitoes were in sight, I concluded to sleep without using the bar. Congratulating myself on being assigned a room where so few of the common enemy of man were lying in wait, I extinguished the light and turned in.

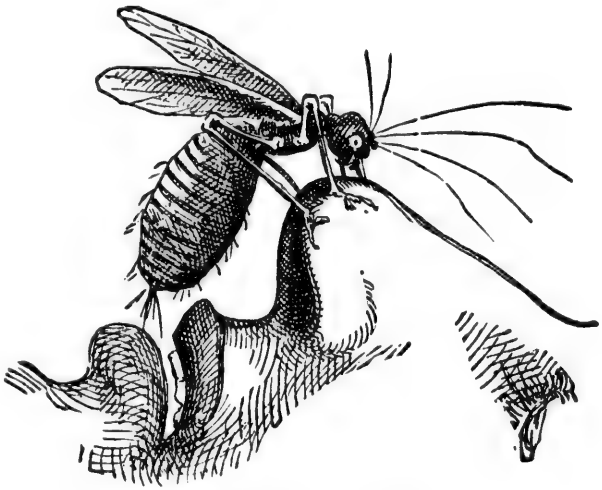
Scarce was I stretched upon the couch when

"At once there rose such hungry yells,
From every point the compass tells,"

that I lost no time in striking a light and adjusting the netting. I now saw them emerging from every conceivable hiding place. Trooping they came, from behind picture-frames, from under the bureau; out of vases and old empty bottles. They were climbing and clambering and pitching towards me with energy. I noticed a steady stream of them shooting out of the closet through the key-hole, with such velocity that they went warping half-way across the apartment before they could check themselves sufficiently to tack around and dive for the bed.

They had all they bargained for, to get safely through that key-hole, too. There was not much spare room, I can tell you. But for the great pressure from behind kept up by others anxious to get through, many a large fellow would have been sticking in that opening yet. But once they got started in, there was no backing out; no, indeed! On! on!

was the cry, and they pressed forward with a rush, often sacrificing a leg or wing by the manœuvre. But they didn't seem to care for the loss of one of those members so long as their bill remained intact. Deprive a mos-



TO THE HILT IN BLOOD.

quito of one wing, and he will seem to laugh at you while he makes the other do double duty. Brush off one leg, and he will shake the remaining ones triumphantly in your face.

But damage his bill and you demoralize him at once. He becomes immediately disheartened.

He loses caste among his companions and confidence in himself. He wabbles about here and there to no purpose, like an old bachelor. You deprive him at once of his song and his supper. You can hardly picture to yourself a more dejected insect, one more hopelessly down in the mouth. He withdraws to the ceiling, or curtain, and looks with envious eyes upon his associates gorging themselves while his poor digestive organs are drying through inactivity.

We would be inclined to pity him in his sad condition, were it not that we hold the whole insect race as coming under our ban. The whine of disappointment, long, loud and quavering, that went up when they ascertained I was protected, will always remain a fixture in my memory.

As they closed around the bed, so numerous were they, their flight was actually impeded. Down they settled with locked wings on the bar above me, thick as snow-flakes around some old uprooted pine by the Madawaska. I had long heard of the mosquitoes of this locality,

and was prepared for an introduction to formidable insects, but found them even worse than I expected.

Discouraged by the mosquitoes, I fled to a neighboring city, only to find that it is the stronghold of fever and ague. In other parts it may be more active for a few months of the year, but here it stays by the people like their consciences. The winds may rise and comb the valley until the very grass is lifted by the roots and borne to the mountains. The sun may grow weary of well doing, enter Capricorn, and for a season be hid; or the rains may descend until the narrow slough—by which the city is situated—becomes a wide-spreading lake, through which ships of the line might plow with safety; but the chills and fever stays by them still. There is no "shaking" it off. It holds its grip like a mortgage. The tender limbs of the new-born babe, and the pithless bones of ripe old age, shiver alike in its awful grasp.

The citizens of this sad place are a serious, matter-of-fact people, who seem to think it was

not the original intention that men should spend any time in laughter, for they indulge very little in witticisms or humor. A good joke is often lost upon them, and the perpetrator of a bad one places himself in jeopardy. A person who attempts a pun that does not carry its point before it, like a sword-fish, is in danger of being immediately seized from behind and hurried in the direction of the Insane Asylum.

While stopping in this delightful place I visited the small theatre of which the inhabitants are justly proud, and shall never forgive myself if I fail to mention the orchestra, that discoursed most eloquent music on that occasion.

Whether the regular musicians of the theatre were on a strike for higher wages, and the manager was obliged to bring in outside talent, I did not learn; but certain it was, the sole instrument that kept the audience awake between the acts, the night in question, was a large piece—a bassoon, I think—filled and manipulated by a stout, spectacled representative from the Faderland.

In addition to the musician's frog-shaped body—which of itself would doubtless have

THE ORCHESTRA.

attracted my attention—he had a head that was truly a study. To say he was bald, is to make

a remark that would be applicable to about two-thirds of the gentlemen in the theatre, but to say that his head was as smooth, as shiny, and devoid of hair, from the eyebrows to the very nape of the neck, as a billiard ball, is hardly doing the head justice. It seemed actually peeled.

Besides, it was of a conical form, and as I looked upon it I thought what an advantage it would have been to me in my younger days if I had had some such thing in the barnyard, over which to break pumpkins for the cattle. I am certain a pumpkin or squash brought down upon such an object with well-centred precision, would fly into as many fragments as the Turkish Empire.

I was not the only person whose attention was arrested by that marvelous development. If a diamond the size of a rutabaga had suddenly flashed, the audience would scarcely have turned with greater haste to contemplate its beauties than they did to regard that head the instant the hat was removed.

It had such a smooth and polished surface that the actors, as they passed back and forth upon the stage, were mirrored out upon it in Liliputian proportions. The large globe light was reflected so perfectly upon that glossy scalp that it shed a positive light to remote corners of the auditorium; and a person would look first at the head, then up at the globe, and then down at the head again, and *then* hardly be prepared to decide from which object the original rays of light proceeded.

The musician had one original "turn" which afforded me much amusement. At the commencement of a tune he would sit facing the stage, which was proper enough; but as he proceeded he would turn by degrees until he was sitting full face to the audience.

The gods in the gallery seemed to consider it their especial privilege to pelt his head with peanuts; and when one would happen to hit—which was quite often—it would bound and skip from the polished object in a manner that would invariably bring down the house.

Standing as it did in bold relief from the dark panel-work and drapery behind, it was a most excellent and inviting mark. Man though I am, with the sobering cares of life closing gloomily around me, I actually regretted I couldn't try a shot at the old codger's head myself.

It has been said "The king of Shadows loves a shining mark." If this is so, how that musician managed to escape the arrows so long is more than I can understand. For many a year he certainly has presented a target worthy the whole archery of the realm of Death.

The evening's entertainment was made up of selections from Shakespeare's tragedies, "Macbeth" and "Othello."

The principal actor, whose name I forget, was the oddest and hungriest-looking player I ever saw stalk across a stage, or foam and fret in histrionic effort. He looked as though he had been dangling from the lowest spoke of Fortune's wheel for the last twenty years. His make-up was terrible also, and after I learned

the performance was not an intentional burlesque, I could hardly keep from hooting whenever he appeared. As the evening advanced,

MACBETH.

however, he warmed up considerably. When he appeared as the murderous Thane moving toward the apartments of his slumbering victim, huskily repeating the thrilling lines, "The bell

invites me! I go, and it is done!" he looked every inch a villain, and the little theatre rung

OTHELLO.

again with the clapping and clattering of the enthusiastic audience. In "Othello" his dress was even worse than in "Macbeth." In the

scene where he smothers Desdemona, he was barefooted, and looked supremely ridiculous. I would have given double the amount I paid for admission for the glorious privilege of kicking him across the stage.

The customary pitcher-shaped lamp which the "Moor" usually bears in his hand upon this occasion, and to which he alludes when he says:—

> "If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me,"

was not procurable. The tragedian therefore carried a candle stuck in the neck of a large wine-bottle, and under his left arm he carried a pillow about the size of a single-bed mattress, with which to put out the light of the fair Desdemona, who was lying upon a lounge at the left of the stage. I was too great a lover of Shakespeare to sit longer by and witness the terrible butchery. I arose and left the house, and as I passed out, the pitying glances of the

audience informed me that they didn't understand the real state of affairs, but thought I was taken suddenly ill. I was ill at ease, and had been, during the entire evening.

On the way down the next morning an overland passenger made my acquaintance on the cars, and while conversing about the long snow-sheds and tunnels he had passed, I informed him of the long tunnel through which we would pass on leaving the valley.

"Are we near that tunnel now?" he asked. "Yes," I answered, "we will enter it in about fifteen minutes." "Is the tunnel dark?" he inquired. "Yes, very dark," I replied, ten shades darker than a cloudy midnight." "By jingo!" he cried, "that's just the thing for me. I forgot to put on a clean shirt last night, and I hate like the deuce to arrive at my destination looking as I do now. Do you think a fellow would have time to put a shirt on while passing through it?" he continued, earnestly.

"He might," I answered, "if he had it ready before reaching the tunnel."

"Well, I'll try a pull, anyway," he said, as he took down the valise from a rack overhead to select the garment. "I'll have it all ready for a hoist," he continued, "and if I don't climb into it faster than a spark into a chimney, I'm not what I think I am, that's all;" and with a look of determination he went to a seat in the rear of the car, and for a time seemed busily engaged preparing for the great change.

I had made an error in regard to the time that would elapse before we reached the tunnel, and the result was we reached it before he was fully prepared for it. Into it the locomotive plunged with a wild scream. Gloom closed around the passengers, hiding the nearest objects from their view. On we sped. The rattling of the trucks told us rail after rail was passed, but still a darkness that might be felt enveloped the rushing train.

Those who were conversing as the car entered the tunnel, stopped as though the icy hand of death had been laid upon their throat. The half-uttered word rested upon the tongue,

and the tunnel, like a long dash, stretched between the parts of a sentence.

I thought of the passenger, doubtless by this time struggling into his linen, and turned around in my seat facing him. With considerable interest I waited the return of light. At last it came glimmering far ahead. Plainer and plainer the objects grew around, and first and most noticeable of all, was the tall form of the passenger from over the mountains, leaning over the seat in front of him, enveloped in his snowy linen, his hands stuck in the sleeves at the elbows, and his head vainly endeavoring to shoot through the opening at the neck, which in his haste he had neglected to unbutton.

Notwithstanding his head was enveloped, he was conscious that light had dawned upon the scene, and his struggles and frantic thrusts became painful to look upon.

Finally the fastening at the neck gave way, and his face came through the opening, red as a pickled beet. Fortunately most of the pas-

sengers were sitting with backs toward him, and but few witnessed the terrible struggle. One old lady, however, got nearly frightened out of her wits. When objects began to grow

A STARTLING APPARITION.

visible around her, she became suddenly apprised of the startling fact that a white figure was bent over her, with outstretched wings fanning the air, and she very naturally came to

the conclusion that an angel was about to gather her to her fathers.

The ashen look of the poor old body, as she stole a glance over her shoulder at the white object behind, showed that however fitted she was—in respect of years—for the final taking off, she was anything but willing to start upon such an uncertain journey.

THE ROD OF CORRECTION.

IT is not often that a poor fellow like myself can have a good laugh at the expense of a high dignitary. To-day, however, an opportunity presented itself, and happily I was in the right humor to appreciate it. Passing along a narrow street, I saw an old Irish woman unmercifully beating her boy with a rod, which, if it had not been divested of twigs and leaves, would have served as a Christmas tree for a good-sized family. This of itself was nothing to make one smile, and perhaps no person would more readily endorse such a sentiment than the boy himself. But the end was not yet.

It appears that while on his way from the grocery, with a pitcher of beer for his mother,

the little fellow tripped up and spilled nearly the whole contents in the street. This was something that Temperance folk might well rejoice over, but it was a serious matter for the boy. The old woman, with parched lips, was standing at the gate, impatiently awaiting her youngster's return. She saw him emerge from the store, pitcher in hand. Her quick eye caught sight of the light foam rising in airy bubbles above the brim, and she knew the grocer had sent her no stinted measure. In fancy she was already quenching her thirst with copious draughts of the cooling drink—when she saw the boy measuring his length upon the planks. Worst, and most lamentable of all, she saw the delectable beverage coursing down the sidewalk in a dozen foaming streams. Her rage knew no bounds. The moment the boy put his foot inside the gate, she seized him with the grip of a virago, and belabored him with the cudgel till he roared. So great was the outcry that every window in the vicinity was immediately crammed with heads. Taught by the lessons of my youth that he who

meddles in other people's affairs often treads upon his own corns, I maintained a wise silence; but I mentally prayed that the wrath of the old fury would be appeased, for the cries and wild

A REAR ATTACK.

antics of the little wretch began to grow monotonous.

There chanced at that moment to be passing an eminent minister who weekly fills his fashionable, spacious church with a glittering con-

gregation. He saw the woman was in a towering passion, and he ventured to remark: "My good woman, the rod of correction should never become the weapon of passion." The remark, which seemed good and to the point, caused her temporarily to suspend hostilities; but she still retained her hold on the collar, as she turned around sharply to ascertain who dared criticise her method of training up a child in the way he should go.

For a minute she glared upon the clergyman with flashing eyes, as if astonished at his interference. Surveying him from the soles of his boots to the very crown swirl of his silk hat, she drew herself up to her full height, and, in the most indignant voice, shouted: "Away wid yer cotations, you ould sermon thief! It's not from the likes of yees I learn me juty!"

The clergyman was nonplussed; he quailed before the fiery eyes and sarcastic tongue of the old vixen; and I fancied his face lit up with joy when he discovered that he was nigh a corner, around which he quickly disappeared.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

ERIN go bragh! St. Patrick's day is upon us, and the city seems wrapped in a "mantle of green," so numerous are the Irish flags flying in the breeze.

> From hovel roof, and church of size
> Alike, the harp and sun-burst flies!

The ear of morn is stunned with the bray of at least a dozen blatant bands, as they discourse Old Erin's soul-stirring airs. It is an easy matter for a person to imagine himself sitting by some sheeling door in "County Kerry" instead of this great American city by the sea. The Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Fenians are out in full force, with clean-boiled shirts and soap-washed faces. Marshals charge

around upon their caparisoned steeds like real heroes, and sitting gracefully as a sack of potatoes upon the back of a spavined mule trotting over a corduroy road. Evidently some of them have never before bent over anything that came nigher to an equine than a saw horse. It is plain

> Those who always rode, now ride the more,
> And those now ride who never rode before.

Well, they love the country that gave them birth, and that is a virtue that is certainly commendable,—a natural excellence often wanting in other nationalities. Besides, celebrating the old gentleman's birthday makes business lively with the stable men and the shoemakers, and that of itself is a good reason why the demonstration should be encouraged. It is hardly probable that any of the great powers will be materially weakened by these loyal manifestations.

Here is a sketch of a spirited member of the "Ancient Order of Hibernians," as he appeared

passing my window in the morning, full of life and loyalty, tripping the asphaltum pavement lightly as though traversing the springy surface

IN THE MORNING.

of his native bogs. And following is another sketch of the same individual in the evening, when full of oaths and whiskey, lying in the gutter with all that ease and abandon which

characterizes the Celtic race, wherever dispersed, in every land and in every age.

The different races of men have their different weaknesses. It may seem an extravagant statement, but I venture to say if there had been no

IN THE EVENING.

rice plant in the world, the Chinese would not have cared to live. I will even go further and say perhaps there would have been no Mongolian race. And now the thought occurs to me, this deficiency in the human family would not have been such a terrible thing after all.

True, we should have been obliged to get along with catnip tea instead of Souchong, which would have been pretty heavy on old women. We also would have been obliged to worry through without old Confucius, which might have made some confusion in metaphysics or political morality. But as the latter could hardly be worse than it is at present with all his teachings, we possibly might have managed to exist very well without the moon-eyed philosopher.

The Teuton dotes on his well-seasoned bologna. The grizzly Emperor William I, standing upon an eminence near Rezonville, overlooking the battle-field, with a spy-glass in one hand and a large bologna sausage in the other, furnished indeed a striking sketch for the special artist of the occasion. The humor of the situation came in when the Emperor, forgetting himself in the excitement of the moment, raised the sausage to his eye instead of the spy-glass, and because he failed to see the squadron of Uhlans—that a moment before

were charging upon a battery—concluded they were blown to smithereens, and losing his usual equanimity, commenced to swear fearfully, and order up another division to take their place. There was a broad and sarcastic humor couched in the remark of the officer at his side, who observed the mistake, and ventured the suggestion, "If your Majesty will take another bite from the sausage, perhaps you will be able to see through it."

And then, there is the jovial, careless, free-hearted, yet quarrelsome Irishman, who thinks a new Jerusalem without a little whiskey still in one corner of it—"over beyant the throne, and forninst the back dure," for instance—would be just no Paradise at all. I believe there is not a race of men on the face of the earth—from Behring Straits to Terra del Fuego, round and about, over and under, or down either quarter—that can extract the same genuine soul-satisfying bliss from a flattened nose or swelled lip, that a real, irrepressible, County Kerry Irishman can. Let him have that, and a good stiff horn

of whiskey to keep the blood running freely, and my advice to you is, keep upon the other side of the street, if you intend to sit for your picture that afternoon, or visit your sweetheart that evening, or expect to take up the collection during divine worship the next Sunday. At such a time he is no respecter of persons, this set-up Irishman.

You may be the Rector of the finest cathedral in the place, the mayor of the city, the judge of the supreme court, or even the governor of the state, and should your hat chance to blow off and roll in front of him—though it should cost him a fall upon the pavement—that man will kick it. I tell you he will kick it, and soundly too. He will make no mincing about it, but go for it, as he would for his neighbor's pig, should he find it in his garden of cabbages. At such times he is full of words also, and can bestow upon the stone that trips him up the same flow of abuse that he can shower upon the man who assists him to his feet.

ALL FOOLS' DAY.

THIS is "all fools' day," and judging by the number of people who are passing along the sidewalk with strings and rags dangling from their coat tails, the custom of making people appear ridiculous is not obsolete. What delight the youngsters take in covering a few bricks with an old hat, and leaving it temptingly upon the sidewalk, while they withdraw into

some nook to watch the bait and halloo at the person who is thoughtless enough to kick it.

Though the custom has age to sanction it, I

SOLD.

am decidedly opposed to making people—either on the first of April or upon any other day—appear ridiculous in their own eyes as well as

in the eyes of every person with whom they come in contact. People will make fools of themselves often enough, without the assistance of others. I wonder why men are not more upon their guard upon this day. Just now I saw a newspaper reporter, who certainly should have known better, kick an old hat from his way, and go limping to the office, denouncing everybody in general, but children in particular. Speaking of reporters calls to mind something that I have often thought. I believe if I had been endowed with more cheek and less scruples about over-stepping the line of veracity, I long before this would have made my mark in the world as a newspaper scribbler.

My unconquerable modesty always rose up like a barrier between me and reportorial fame. It would never allow me to dip into trivial, baseless rumors, and magnify them into scandalous reports. My pride, too, was a clog that blocked the wheel of progress. I could never throw it aside long enough to intrude myself uninvited at select gatherings, or creep and

crouch under a window sill or behind a door, like a base eavesdropper, to hear words that were not intended for the public ear, in order to work up a stirring article. But for these drawbacks, I cannot help thinking I would have done well at the business, because, by a singular decree of fate, I am generally present whenever any strange or amusing incident transpires, or even when scenes of a serious nature furnish work for the pen, and many a time, too, when I could well wish myself suddenly removed far enough from the distressing scene before me.

This afternoon, for example, a terrible assault was perpetrated in the back yard of the house adjoining the one in which I reside.

There is no use talking, I will have to get up and bundle out of this locality, before long. It is becoming too rough a quarter for me. Its poisonous air would tarnish the brightest reputation that ever shone upon a forehead.

With my usual luck, I happened to witness the affair. Thus far I have kept it to myself, as I have no desire to figure in a court of justice

in any such scrape. Some people, perhaps, would rush forward and volunteer their testimony, but I am not of that turn of mind, and calculate to keep my mouth shut until it is pried open by a legal bar. I have been looking over the evening papers, but they make no mention of the case, so perhaps the authorities are keeping the matter quiet, fearing that by giving it publicity they would defeat the ends of justice. With this thought in mind, and to help them along in their efforts, it being "all fools' day," also, I will say no more about it.